

The Nation.

NEW YORK, THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 1875.

The Week.

THE business world was startled on Friday morning by the announcement that the Bank of California had, just previous to the close of bank hours the day before, stopped payment. This was followed on Saturday morning by the news that Mr. Ralston, the president of the bank, had suddenly died while bathing on the evening of Friday; whether he took his own life, or whether the death was natural, is a question in dispute. To those familiar with San Francisco speculations and the extent to which Mr. Ralston was involved in them, the failure of the bank was no surprise; but to the great majority, who regarded the bank as the representative financial institution of the Pacific coast—a section of the country which had escaped the evils attendant on the use of an irredeemable paper currency—the stoppage of the bank was shocking. San Francisco was thrown into a panic, and two other institutions—the Merchants' Exchange Bank and the National Gold Bank and Trust Company—closed their doors. The exchanges were closed, and many minor suspensions occurred. The news from California since the failure has been meagre, and the extent of the effects of the panic there is not yet known. The real condition of the affairs of the Bank of California is still a matter of conjecture. All accounts concede that the liabilities of the bank were from two to three times its capital, and much larger than capital and other assets combined, and that if the creditors of the bank are to be protected it will be by reason of advances of the stockholders, who are known to be men of ample ability to pay in full every debt of the bank. The effect of the failure on this side of the Rocky Mountains was light, and there was no reason why it should have been otherwise. The causes of the failure are more clearly apparent. Mr. Ralston, a born speculator and accomplished in all the arts of speculation, was identified with nearly every speculative enterprise of the coast; in short, he was widely "extended," and his control had involved the bank in his speculations to a sufficient extent to impair its credit. Besides, in his speculative campaigns, he had incurred the enmity of other speculative capitalists, who, there is every reason to believe, combined to effect the overthrow of the bank, knowing well that with its downfall his power was for ever broken. A depositors' run on the bank was started, and its unsoundness was demonstrated in less than forty-eight hours. The failure was the result simply of illegitimate banking, of a spirit of speculation which in a country like California was kept alive and ablaze by mining discoveries and the excitement incident thereto, instead of by the uncertainties of a fluctuating currency. In addition to the Bank of California suspension came that of a large mercantile house in Baltimore—Stirling, Ahrens & Co.—a firm which did an extensive business in the importation and refining of sugar. Its liabilities exceed \$2,000,000, and the losses fall for the most part directly on Baltimore. Other minor failures have occurred, so that the week has been notable in this respect.

Notwithstanding these failures, the outlook in regard to the autumn trade is far from discouraging, and merchants are hopeful. Both the South and the West have full crops, and the West has the advantage of high prices for its products. The new crop of cotton is estimated at from 4,250,000 to 4,500,000 bales; and in addition to this great advantage is the scarcely less important one that the political condition of the Southern States is more settled than for years. The stock of manufactured goods in the hands of distributors in the agricultural sections is not large, and, with the need and the means to replenish, it is naturally expected that there will be a large distribution of goods. The manufacturing interests of the

country can, of course, not be improved until after the present overstock of goods in their hands or those of their agents is removed; but, with the agricultural interest flourishing, this is only a matter of time. The money market is becoming firmer, but the New York banks begin the autumn with a surplus reserve of over \$20,000,000, so that there is no reason to expect an oppressive restriction in bank facilities. In Wall Street speculation was tame until the latter part of the week, when there was a break-down in Western Union Telegraph and one or two other speculative shares. Gold advanced during the week about one "point," and for a variety of reasons. The Bank of California failure, and the panic in San Francisco which followed, induced the transfer of about \$2,000,000 gold from New York; a decline of consols in London, because of talk of complications between Great Britain and China, had its influence.

The "soft-money men" held their expected convention at Detroit last week. The attendance was expected, it is said, to reach 10,000, but only 600 persons were present, and the proceedings were languid. The principal speaker was Mr. Kelley, and there was a letter from Henry C. Carey. The resolutions were of a very extraordinary character. They declared that the people ought to lend the Government money at a low rate of interest; that the Government ought to supply the people with "a safe and uniform currency"; and that the volume of this currency ought to be adequate "to the requirements of the country," but they did not mention what these requirements are; denied that the "soft-money men" were repudiationists or inflationists, and affirmed that they simply advocated the redemption of greenbacks in bonds, and of bonds in greenbacks, but did not acknowledge their obligations for this idea to Mr. Wilkins Micawber, formerly of London, and afterwards of Australia; advocated the issue of Kelley's 3-65 bonds to the whole amount of the Government debt, to be changed and exchanged for greenbacks on the Micawber plan; the payment of all debts of the country in legal-tenders, except bonds made payable in coin; demanded the immediate repeal of the specie-resumption bill of January, 1875; declared that the currency would render the country "independent financially of foreign influence and complications," and not subject to "the disturbing control or influence" of the Hwang-tse or foreign devils; and called for greenback clubs to push the Micawber idea. There has been so much discussion of these matters already, that, without meaning any disrespect to Mr. Micawber, we shall make no comment on the resolutions.

"The Scholar" has been making some disturbance in "politics" during the week. The Milwaukee *Sentinel* takes up the case of Professor Anderson of the Wisconsin State University, of which Mr. Bishop of Milwaukee gave some account in a recent number of the *Nation*, and offers various reasons, of the accuracy of which we cannot judge, for the selection of Mr. Warner for the Secretaryship of State; says he is not only of Norwegian parentage, but was born in Norway; that he is not illiterate, but is "master of the English as well as of his own language, and of all the branches taught in our common schools"; and that instead of being "rather disreputable," he is highly esteemed by the people of his county. It also adds that Professor Anderson is wanting in judgment, but admits that Mr. Barron, the Regent, met him at the Capitol, and "quietly suggested to him that it might injure the State University if a professor were seen dictating to a political convention whom it should and whom it should not nominate." It does not mention, however, what we believe is true, that Mr. Barron tried to get Professor Anderson removed from his professorship, nor does it notice the assertion of a correspondent of the Madison *Democrat*, that the worthy Mr. Barron himself, after protesting pathetically on behalf of "the poor man" in the Assembly against having the land granted by Congress

to the State University appraised at more than a dollar and a quarter an acre, he being a Regent of the University at the time, entered 69,000 acres of it himself a few weeks later, which he has since been selling to "the poor man" at from \$5 to \$10 an acre. This, if true, is far worse than "dictating to a political convention."

The affair also drew forth a letter from Professor Sumner, of Yale, who is himself a "scholar in politics," and who says in substance, as the result of his experience, that politics is unpleasant for the Scholar, but that nevertheless he ought to go into it. The letter would have been more valuable if it had gone into details, but it called forth from the *Springfield Republican* some approving remarks, which closed with an expression of opinion that New Haven politics with Postmaster Sperry and Congressman Kellogg is a wretched place for the Scholar, and that in any case politics can do very well without him, the country being really very well taken care of by "ungrammatical common people," who know nothing about political economy and Greek conjugations. We must remind the *Republican*, which is nothing if not "practical," that to find a match for the plan of saving the country through Horace Greeley, superintended by Mr. Fenton and General John Cochrane, with the Sermon on the Mount for a platform—a plan which the *Republican* highly approved—one would have to go, not to colleges or libraries, but to kindergartens. It is not everybody who can afford to be hard on the Scholar.

The Republicans in New York seem to be making a serious mistake in their attacks on Mr. Tilden and his Canal Reform. That Mr. Tilden is a politician, and has in times past had some very queer political associates, there can be no doubt, but there is no doubt either that his movement against the "Canal thieves" bears all the marks of an honest attempt to rid the State of a great abuse. His investigating commission is, of some hundreds which have been investigating abuses during the past few years, the first which has succeeded in getting any money back from the people who have defrauded the public. Twelve thousand dollars is not much, to be sure, but it is a good deal more than has ever been restored by Tweed. The work of the commission, too, in making its enquiries into the frauds, has been very thorough, and conducted in the manner of a judicial investigation, rather than in the loose and disconnected way in which such matters are generally managed. They have not allowed State officials implicated in the negligence by which the frauds were made possible to go about denying their culpability and accusing the commissioners of ignorance and incapacity, and declaiming against the evil tendencies of the times which permit the slander of our best men to go unrebuked; but they have, in all such cases, summoned the officials before them, and called upon them to make good their denials, which has in no case been successfully attempted. Honest and able investigations, followed immediately by clear reports and by suits for restitution, are what most people suppose Canal reform to mean, and that such reform as this is all a sham, like the platitudes of a convention, is beyond belief. If the Republicans really have any hope of getting control of the State again, there is only one way for them to do it, and that is by going to work and showing, at Washington and in the Custom-houses, that they are better reformers than the Democrats. This, however, takes time and trouble; it is a great deal easier to denounce Tilden for his hypocrisy and for being the "tool" of the "Boss."

The Enforcement Acts provide in general terms for the criminal prosecution of any two or more persons who unite, combine, and conspire together to obstruct and hinder the execution of the processes of the courts. It would seem as if the Attorney-General would have to begin proceedings under them very soon against the proprietors of the *Tribune*, Judge Daniels of the Supreme Court, and Mr. A. G. Browne, jr., who have formed a combination or conspiracy to render null and void the judgment of the Court of

Appeals in the Tweed case. Judge Daniels has just rendered a decision in a habeas-corpus proceeding, in which he admits that the Tweed case must be good law, but declines to apply it, on the ground, apparently, that the consequences would be bad. The *Tribune*, on the other hand, has printed a letter from Mr. Browne in which that gentleman (a lawyer of established reputation) says that in the case of *Suydam v. Smith* (52 New York 383), the Court decided exactly the opposite of what it had laid down in the Fisher decision cited by Mr. O'Connor. The persons who make these shameful attacks on this venerable bench should remember that any little inconsistency they may discover in its decision is probably due to the political character of these jurists. Without going so far as to say that all important cases, like the legal-tender suits and the Tweed case, ought to be decided in favor of both plaintiff and defendant, it is clear that a judge actively in politics who, when accused of having decided a case in a particular way, can immediately produce a decision made about the same time directly the opposite way, has many points in his favor before the people.

The New Jersey constitutional amendments, which are to be voted on in a fortnight, provide against any loan of money or credit by cities and towns to individuals or corporations, make the pay of legislators an annual salary, forbid special legislation, and give the governor the right to veto parts of an appropriation bill while approving others. These amendments were drawn up by a constitutional commission, and are all good. We should be glad to see in some State the experiment tried of allowing the governor to dismiss the legislature for cause shown. Though probably this would seem to most constitutional reformers something like a reintroduction of "monarchical" prerogative, there would really be nothing dangerous in it, and it would not be nearly so great a blow at the sovereignty of the legislature as many other reforms actually adopted and found to work well. The threat of dissolution held over the head of a corrupt and slothful legislature might prevent the scandal to which its sense of irresponsible power frequently gives rise. As an illustration of the value of restrictions on loans, State or municipal, we may refer to the very striking instance of the State of New York. The constitution of the State contains very stringent clauses to keep the State debt within limits, while the city of New York has been left to take care of itself. Both State and city have been constantly plundered by contractors and statesmen of every stripe; but the State debt to-day may be said hardly to exist, while the city owes a hundred and twenty-five millions at least, and her debt is steadily increasing.

The Georgia "insurrection" has subsided almost as suddenly as it arose, the number of Georgians slaughtered, as is common in such cases, being one negro, who is supposed to have been killed in a squabble with some of his own race. A large number of desperate characters, however, have been arrested and lodged in jail, and the grand jury has been charged by Judge Herschel V. Johnson with regard to them. The black-hearted villany of the South comes out very plainly in his charge. He begins by telling the grand jury that he has been advised of a "plot of insurrection," and has ordered a full investigation into all the circumstances. He then gives legal definitions of insurrection and attempts to incite insurrection, cautioning the jury not to be guided by suspicion, rumor, or hearsay. He warns them, too, against exaggerating the enormity of the crime, or allowing any consideration of color to affect their minds, reminding them that they must "ignore the fact that the accused are negroes" or "that they were ever slaves." The explanation of this extraordinary behavior is not, as some foolish enthusiasts would have us believe, a growing spirit of fairness and good-sense at the South, but a deep-laid conspiracy on the part of the Georgia "banditti" to murder all the negroes and Union men, meanwhile keeping themselves beyond the reach of Ku-klux law by a great display of moderation and desire for justice. The wretched tyrants are now conscious

that the eyes of the North are upon them, and, like the bandits of the stage, the judge, the sheriff, and the grand jury have come to the conclusion that they are "observed" and must "dissemble."

Colonel Baker has been peremptorily dismissed from the army, with the usual formula—it is said by the interference of the Queen, who put an end to the waverings of the Commander-in-chief's Office on the point of allowing him to resign. The delay in announcing this decision, combined with the lightness of the judicial sentence, excited a good deal of dissatisfaction, which found expression in the radical press, and with a good deal of force, the special point of complaint being his treatment as a "first-class misdemeanant" and exemption from all the hardships and degradation of prison life—from everything, in fact, except confinement. The dismissal from the service, however, completes his ruin, as it will prevent his finding employment in any foreign army, besides driving him out of society at home, and ought, even if he is not a very sensitive man, to kill him. There is some slight connection between this incident and the career of Kenealy, which appears to be rapidly approaching its close also. One of his own "Magna Charta Associations," and that the largest, has turned upon him and denounced him savagely for his bad temper, want of judgment, and tyrannical disposition, and, worse than all, accuses him of pocketing "the people's pence," without rendering any accounts or having any responsible treasurer.

The trouble in Herzegovina does not seem to abate, and there are rumors of the entrance of reinforcements from Dalmatia and Croatia, and of various reverses to the Turkish troops. But as all this news is collected at Trieste, and comes down from the mountains in the mouths of peasants, it is not very trustworthy. There appears to be little doubt, however, that the Turkish troops on the spot do not make much headway; that, in the absence of railways, reinforcements reach them very slowly; and that those going by sea, by way of Kleck, find difficulty in penetrating the defiles into the mountains; that the Servians have put an army corps "in observation" on the frontier, which, though it looks like a precaution in the interest of peace, operates as an encouragement to the insurgents, and has had the effect of causing excitement among the Servians themselves; that there is danger of popular pressure being brought to bear on Prince Milan in favor of interference, but that nothing of the kind will be permitted by Austria; that the whole affair is having a very serious effect on Turkish credit, and that there is still talk of mediation.

The Sultan has at last, or rather has again, apparently been impressed with the necessity of putting his affairs in order. He has announced his intention of contributing \$2,000,000 out of his civil list this year towards the cost of making a railroad to Bagdad, and in fact has agreed to cut the civil list down permanently from about \$6,000,000 a year to less than \$5,000,000. A reduction has been made too in all the other official salaries, the Grand Vizier losing one-third of his. Another measure proposed is what is called "the secularization of the Vakoufs," or lands belonging to the mosques under a singular form of endowment. This endowment consists in the consecration to the service of the mosque of a piece of land by the owner, who, however, does not surrender the possession of it, nor does the mosque come into possession of it until his descendants in the direct line are extinct, but from the moment of the gift the property becomes exempt from taxation and strictly entailed. No holder can afterwards alienate it, and the state cannot tax it. The consequence is that an enormous extent of real estate has thus been withdrawn from taxation, and the desire to prevent the property from lapsing by the extinction of the founder's family has long been a fruitful source of

fraud. It is now proposed to give the present holders a release from the entail on the direct heirs, and to allow its descent in the collateral line on the payment of a fine. This is not likely to bring in much if any money, first, because the holders of Vakoufs are generally poor and unenterprising; secondly, because those who have direct heirs would not see the use of barring the entail; and, thirdly, because those who have not would hardly ever care enough about the collateral branch to be willing to pay money for its benefit. Reforms in the direct taxation are also in contemplation, such as the commutation of the tithes now levied on produce for a fixed money payment, but then this could fairly be carried out only through a small portion of the empire. Through most of it the absence of roads deprives the farmer of access to any market not within a few miles of his home, and to ask him to pay in cash, therefore, would be asking an impossibility. The deficit last year was \$1,500,000, which may not seem large, but is likely to be larger this year. The prospect of a financial collapse naturally adds fresh interest to the troubles in Herzegovina.

The connection of Turkish finance with Indian finance is apparently very remote, and yet it is in reality by no means remote. A breakdown in the former might be the means of bringing Russia and England once more face to face on the Eastern Question, and the collision would seriously aggravate the anxiety already felt among English politicians about the Russian advances in Central Asia, and in a scarcely less degree about the condition of native Indian opinion. In a debate in the House of Commons brought on about two months ago by Mr. Baillie Cochrane, Sir George Mackenzie, who long held a high administrative position in the Northwestern Provinces, showed conclusively that nothing could be done either by arms or diplomacy in Afghanistan to arrest or prepare for a Russian attempt, for instance, on Herat, and that there was nothing for it but to await events. It is, however, admitted on all sides that there is not much to be feared from Russian arms, as the British can meet any force with which they can cross the mountains with a force far more effective; but that there is, in the present state of Indian feeling, great danger from the effect of Russian influence. The very efforts which England has made to promote civilization in India, and which have been wonderfully fruitful, seem to be working her evil, for with the moral and mental elevation of the natives has come growing discontent with foreign rule and with various kinds of inequality, such as the difference in the pay of English and native officials. This discontent now begins to show itself with considerable boldness in the native press and theatre, and it is very puzzling. British rule is the best rule India has ever had. Her grievances are sentimental mainly, but sentimental grievances are just the ones with which Englishmen find it most difficult to deal. One little incident which has just occurred shows how delicate the relations of the two communities are becoming. The cheating of the Manchester manufacturers in the quality of their goods has led some native capitalists to import machinery and start mills at home, which have proved eminently successful, and, with the aid of cheap labor and the import duties now levied, they are able to beat the coarser English fabrics out of the market. Whereupon some of the Manchester men have called on the Government to lower the duties; and very cool observers, who have little sympathy with the Manchester men, such as the *Economist*, are urging the Government to do so, because it is well known that they are not to be, and were never intended to be, kept up longer than there was absolute need for the money they bring in, and that "it can conceive nothing more dangerous to the incipient industry of a country than to attract capital temporarily into a trade by artificial bounties and then withdraw the aid so given." This is true; but the matter has a political as well as an economical bearing, and there is now the danger that a reduction of the duties will, under present circumstances, be looked on by the natives as a sacrifice of their interests to those of their British competitors in trade.

THE CRASH AT SAN FRANCISCO.

THE effects of the panic at San Francisco upon affairs at the East are apparently likely to be so slight, and it finds the public mind so hardened to financial disasters, that there will probably be much less philosophizing over it than the magnitude of the disaster would lead one to expect. But it throws some light which is worth attention on problems now under discussion at the East. It is not impossible that some of the half-witted advocates of irredeemable paper may see in it proof of the worthlessness of coin as a circulating medium, and will observe at their meetings in a fatuous way that we now perceive that specie furnishes no protection against panics; to which the reply is, that nobody has said it did. In fact, nearly all the great panics in commercial history occurred "on a specie basis." What *was* said by the friends of the greenback was, however, that, being a non-exportable money, it would furnish protection against panics, and this was never said with so much confidence as in the winter of 1872-3, on the eve of a very great panic. It is now established pretty effectually that we are at least just as much exposed to commercial crises under irredeemable as under redeemable paper. The friends of hard money, however, go further than this, and say that inasmuch as the constant fluctuation of values under a paper standard gives trade an aleatory character, it increases the spirit of speculation in a greater degree than hard money, and in so far as it does this is more likely to produce panics than hard money.

But, as we have before now pointed out in these columns, it is not so much in the production of panics as in the recovery from them that the evils of an irredeemable paper currency and the advantages of hard money are seen; and of this we have no doubt the California catastrophe is going to furnish another striking illustration. After a panic under an irredeemable currency, when men come to put their affairs in order, wipe out old scores, and try to make a fresh start, they find themselves met at the very outset by a clamorous demand from that part of the community which has goods for sale or debts to pay, that the standard of value shall be changed in the interest of "the debtor class"; or, in other words, that the very foundations on which trade rests shall be taken up and laid anew. At a time when the uncertainty caused by a general collapse of credit is at its height, and is filling men's hearts with fear, they find themselves threatened with the loss of the only instrument by which they can ascertain the value either of their own property or of anybody else's. In the midst of a gale, with the sails flying from the yards, the ship on her beam-ends, a part of the crew insists on throwing the compass and sextant overboard, and steering by the stars and dead-reckoning. Through this last experience we at the East are now passing. Under a specie régime, no such aggravation of a panic is possible. When the first burst of alarm is over, and people look to see where they are, and in what manner they shall begin anew, they find the gold standard still untouched, and by its aid they find out exactly what they are worth, and what their debtors are worth, and in making settlements are able to tell exactly what they will receive or what they will have to pay one year or ten years hence. The advantage of this in clearing away the rubbish of overspeculation is simply incalculable. In the great crisis of 1837, and again in the great crisis of 1857, we had this advantage. When the squall was over, and men began to examine the ruins, they were not met by crowds of blatherskite orators inviting them to settle their debts in bits of paper, and pointing out the untold riches which lay in calling every pint a quart, or every yard a yard and a half. The bank currency went, but all debts and all property were estimated in gold and silver. In the present crisis, on the other hand, we do not possess this advantage, and hence the slowness of our recovery. Every debtor wants to settle in a different kind of money, and some in new money got up for the occasion. Every month some quack appears on the scene with a new standard of value, manufactured by a patent process of his own, and gets a parcel of politicians to promise to have its use made compulsory on all citizens.

It is no wonder that under these circumstances people are afraid to go into any new business, and are longing to get safely out of the old ones, and are letting their money lie idle in the bank, where it is likely to do least mischief and expose them to fewest risks.

From these evils the Californians, owing to their clinging to the specie standard, will escape. Now, when they begin to settle old scores, they will settle on a fixed basis, which politicians cannot shake or alter. Everybody knows what his debtor's assets are worth and what they will be worth, other things remaining the same, a year or five years hence. He has not, in winding up his old ventures, to keep an eye on Kelley, or Allen, or Sam Cary, or George H. Pendleton, or to find out what Thurman is thinking, or what Morton or Logan is up to. The rant and speculation of all these eminent thinkers and economists will pass him by like the idle wind. About the 3-65 scheme, and the land-bank, and "the poor man's money," and the "people's money," and "the blood-stained, battle-born money," he will not trouble his head. He will listen, not for the melodious notes of the inflationist oratory, but for the chink of United States dollars, and on them, and not on the rapid speculations of half-cracked demagogues, he will seek to rebuild his prosperity. One other advantage the Californians will have of which we here can know nothing. It is said, though we do not believe it, that the Bank of California failed because gold coin was scarce; the real reason was the common one—its inability to pay its debts. But supposing gold coin to be over-scarce in California, scarcer than the needs of commerce require, and the people demand it, and are willing to sell their property to procure it, back it will come from Europe as fast as it is wanted, and when it comes *it will go into the circulation*. The Californians will not witness the extraordinary spectacle which was witnessed in this city during the panic in 1873, of gold arriving in large quantities from Europe to lie in bank, at a moment when the banks were paying their depositors in certified checks for want of currency.

But for nothing is the Californian crisis more valuable than for the illustration it affords of the danger of "basing" credit on things which cannot be readily turned into coin. To put money into things which it cannot be taken out of at short notice has long been recognized as the very essence of bad banking. Nearly all great bank failures have occurred from this course. No bank which issues notes and takes money on deposit, payable on demand, can help enterprises from which returns come in slowly, if at all, except at the peril of its life. Therefore, attempts on the part of banks to aid in "developing the material resources of the country" are simply mad. This is the business of capitalists, not of banks. The temptations it offers to bankers whose heads are not strong, or who are intoxicated with the fumes of success, are often irresistible, particularly in this country, where schemes "with millions in them" are so common. Nevertheless, it is in this business that the Bank of San Francisco, or rather its president, seems to have engaged, and he has perished as scores of others have perished before him. But at the bottom of this rashness, perhaps on his part, and unquestionably on the part of many others who have come to grief in the same way, there lay a hallucination which shows itself constantly in the speeches of the paper-money quacks, viz., the notion that so long as your paper represents property, or, as they say, is "based" on property, which has or may some day have value, you cannot make a mistake in issuing it. The Bank of California was in this way "based" on mines and canals and railroads and hotels which it had used its funds in working, and therefore, according to our currency doctors, it ought not to have failed. They have, in fact, used the term "base" so much, and have in using it so rapidly extended its meaning, that the connection they make between promises to pay and the thing they are "based" on, is often simply one of mental association. They often talk about "basing" as if they thought that a man might, if he saw a cow worth \$50 passing his window, give his note to a creditor for that sum "based" on the cow, on the simple condition of informing the creditor of the nature of the transaction and without having any property in the cow whatever,

or without her having any connection with the note beyond suggesting its amount. The scheme of having the Government issue notes based "on the entire wealth of the country" is hardly more rational than the issue of notes by private citizens "based on" other people's cows. The "entire wealth of the country" not being in the least degree available for the payment of the notes, not being salable or in any manner disposable in satisfaction of them, they might as well be "based on" the crown jewels of England or the guano of Peru. All "basing" of credit, or promises to pay money on demand, on anything not immediately convertible into cash, is in fact a delusion which is at the root of all bad currency schemes and all bad banking. Analyze any of the great national or banking swindles or collapses of the last two hundred years, and we shall find that they have consisted principally in "basing" obligations to pay money on something not immediately salable for coin—sometimes hopes, sometimes land, sometimes railroads, and sometimes buildings or bridges. The final form of the craze is the issue of national currency, secured by something over which the Government has no control, and which it could not sell if it tried. "Basing" is, in fact, the great madness of the times.

THE FARMER AS A "MEDIEVAL BARON."

WHEN the Grangers and their friends were, after the panic, driven to extremities in their efforts to describe the enormous, flagitious, and high-handed greed of the Railroad Bondholder and Stock Speculator, and words failed them in direct recital of his crimes, they resorted to analogy, or, as they would say in Brooklyn, to an "allegory." They said that anybody who wanted to receive a distinct impression of the Bondholder must study the history of the Middle Ages, and make himself familiar with the manners and customs of the robber barons of that sad period, who used to sally forth from their strongholds on fine mornings and truss peaceful travelers on the highways, or bastinado the poor serfs down at the village in the hollow. If, on the other hand, anybody wished to receive a distinct impression of the Farmer who lives along the lines of road in the West, and travels on them, or sends his produce to market by them, he should read La Bruyère's and other contemporary accounts of the French peasantry before the Revolution, the brown, filthy, long-haired, greasy, stooped, leather-skinned, and ferocious-looking apes who passed in the French fields for men and women. We are not jesting about this. This comparison was seriously made in a paper read before the Social Science Association by a prominent champion of the Farmer, and he was invited by the president of one of our leading colleges to repeat it before the students, as a noteworthy, if not accurate, picture of American agricultural society less than two years ago, and the Granger newspapers and lecturers took greatly to the simile. The Medieval Baron and the Degraded Serf of poor old Europe were reported at all the conventions as having established themselves west of the Alleghanies in spite of the Constitution and the fifteen Amendments, and might be seen by anybody who chose to hire a buggy and drive out on the prairie. The serf could always be found either ploughing in his fields or reading the newspapers in his own parlor, and the Baron's man-at-arms stood on guard at the railroad station, levying the dues for his lord.

To the surprise and pain of the Eastern public, however, accounts are coming in every day which seem to indicate that the Farmer has got tired of being a Serf, and has himself become a Medieval Baron. Now, as a Serf, he was simply unfortunate; but as a Baron he is immoral. It is unpleasant to be robbed and bastinadoed, but not wicked; while to rob and cudgel is sinful in the highest degree. Nevertheless, it does really seem as if our old friend was tired of his humble but virtuous rôle as a hind, or villein, and had converted himself at one bound into a high-handed and ruthless lord, and as if he had either reduced the Bondholder to serfdom, or had cooped him up in the walled towns,

and stripped him carefully every time he ventured outside. The stories about him in this new character are now so numerous that we can hardly doubt their general accuracy. To some of them, in which he is represented as extracting money from the Bondholder for town and county improvements, ostensibly as a loan, just as his medieval prototype used to extract it from Isaac of York and Moses of Seville, and then laugh at him and pull his beard when he asked for repayment, we have already called attention. The most recent example has occurred in Mason County, Illinois, where the local Barons got the Bondholder to advance money to make a levee to keep the river from overflowing their lands, and gave him in return county bonds, which professed to be "based" on assessments laid on the property that was benefited by the embankment. That the Bondholders should not have known that such bonds were illegal under the new constitution, and would bind neither the county nor anybody else, seems doubtless very extraordinary; but what can one expect from a Serf? That the Barons knew, we have not the least doubt, and that they joked and laughed over the operation in their castles on the prairie, we have just as little. Accordingly, when the Bondholder asked for his money, he was told with a chuckle that the issue of the bonds was unconstitutional, and that he must take himself off. To be sure, they had got the money, and the lands were drained, and the owners were reaping the fruits of the outlay, but the Barons do not expect to be called on to repay loans or surrender plunder. If they were compelled to do so, where would be the use of being a Baron?

The Bondholder is having another very curious experience down in Alabama. The Barons there determined to treat themselves to one of those modern contrivances called a railroad, to wit, "The Alabama and Chattanooga" line. So they got a number of English and Dutch money-lenders to advance them nearly \$5,000,000 in 1869 on the security of first-mortgage bonds, guaranteed by the State Government, which were put on the London market by the aid of prospectuses containing several false statements upon important points. On the first of January, 1871, the company in due course defaulted in the payment of the interest. This and the interest of the following July were then paid by the State, according to contract, and it took possession of the road. In the following September the road was put into bankruptcy and sold under an order of the Court to the State of Alabama, which began to try to sell it to somebody else. In the meantime another Court appointed a receiver of the property, nominally in the interest of the mortgagees, and with "extensive borrowing powers." In the following January the State also made default on the interest on the bonds, and having failed to pay the small amount in cash due on its purchase of the road from the Bankruptcy Court—about \$235,000—the Court threatened to sell the road again to the highest bidder, without regard to the first-mortgages, unless the money was put up by somebody. So the first-mortgage bondholders met in great alarm, and agreed to advance the amount needed, \$250,000, to the State, and the State was to issue \$1,500,000 currency bonds, which were to be given to the bondholders in payment of their back coupons. So they paid the cash over to the State, and awaited with impatience for these currency bonds. Two months afterwards they learned, however, to use their own somewhat comic phrase in the report which lies before us, "with feelings of which deep disappointment formed a part" (what was the composition of the remainder they do not mention), that the Governor, or Head Baron, had postponed the payment to the Bankruptcy Court, and that he was using the new bonds in payment of the floating debt of the State, and that the State Treasurer did not see much use in paying the back coupons, as the State would "have to default again in sixty days." Accordingly, it did promptly default in the following July, and the Governor applied to the United States Circuit Court to have new receivers appointed, and new receivers were appointed accordingly. We have said that the old ones had "extensive borrowing powers." Under their management the road earned exactly twenty-five per cent. of its working expenses, and they borrowed as hard as they could to meet the deficiency, and borrowed harder than ever after

the application had been made to the Court to remove them, so that they managed to contract a "floating debt" of \$1,200,000. The two new receivers, however, in some unaccountable manner, made the road pay its expenses and something more in the first two months of their administration.

The suit in which these receivers were appointed ended in another order of sale, in which the rights of the first-mortgage bondholders were protected as against everything but the receiver's loans, and the validity of these was ordered to be proved. A man named Balch, about whom the bondholders could learn nothing, then turned up as purchaser, and the Court directed the road to be delivered to him on certain conditions, of which the first was the deposit of \$200,000 in cash; but as soon as he found he could have his purchase he disappeared, and after the appointment of another set of receivers, and another sale, the first-mortgage bondholders finally bought the road, and are now in possession; that is to say, after two or three years of litigation and worry, during which they have lost the interest on their money and have been cheated by the State, they are put in possession of an uncompleted and ill-equipped road, have lost the guarantee of the State, and are left to bring their property up to the paying point as well as they can under the savage eye of the Honest Farmer, who will probably be legislating against them a year or two hence as foreign extortioners and speculators, and egging on the State Attorney-General to sue them, and the Governor to call out the militia against them, and "bring them under the dominion of the law." It must be admitted that this sort of performance does not do much for the national credit, and does still less for the national morals. A sovereign State playing the part of a common Jeremy Diddler, by using money for one purpose which was paid to it for another, and converting its own bonds into an instrument of fraud, is one of those spectacles in which there is a lesson; but it is certainly not an improving one.

A WHITEBAIT RETROSPECT.

LONDON, August 14, 1875.

AMONG the customs which the earnest Administration presided over by Mr. Gladstone allowed to fall into desuetude, and which the easy-going Administration presided over by Mr. Disraeli has revived, may be mentioned the ministerial Whitebait dinner at Greenwich on the Thames. Of what particular ceremonial this indigestible banquet is the survival, I do not pretend to say. It is an idiosyncrasy or fancy of the governing classes in this country. What it comes to is this: In the hot August days, at the end of an exhausting period of work, some thirty or forty middle-aged and elderly English gentlemen, each with his own comfortable house in London and his three or four luxurious clubs, go aboard a dirty river steamboat and steam down through the least savory part of the river Thames to an inferior eating-house overlooking the mud and refuse of London, and there surfeit themselves on curiously-dressed sea-fish and indifferent wine. This was the old annual prelude to the close of the session before Mr. Gladstone became Prime Minister, and this is the revival which Mr. Disraeli—a man who looks as if he should not tamper with his constitution—has thought it due to a Conservative reaction to bring out. Last Wednesday the Ministers went down to Greenwich, and all the more important among them—both peers and commoners—were present. This time last year, you may remember, there was a good deal of talk in the newspapers about the Whitebait dinner. Mr. Disraeli retired to the seclusion of his villa in Buckinghamshire while his Ministers had their fish feast, and the Marquis of Salisbury, who was then brooding over the insults heaped on him by his chief in a moment of extreme elation, was pointedly announced in the fashionable prints to have gone to Hatfield. The gossipmongers, who are clever at detecting the signs of the times, saw in these defections from the dinner a split in the Cabinet. But nothing came of it. Terror of dyspepsia had probably more to do with their defection than any other emotion. This year they were both in their places. Philosophers say that pity is the true foundation of the feelings of affection, and it may be that pity for Mr. Disraeli's misfortunes during the past session has knit together the hearts of his Cabinet. How that may be, I cannot say, but there was no appearance of estrangement, and they sat down to their banquet as if they liked it, and rather enjoyed each other's society.

It may not be uninteresting to speculate what these eminent persons talked about at this the supreme effort of the session. They are at present, it must be remembered, the most important people in England—the people who are keeping the consciences and guiding the destinies of the country, and to whom their country looks in time of trouble. It is not, indeed, difficult to imagine one class of topics which might engross the attention of these the custodians of the good name of England at the present moment, and it is not a pleasant class; and first let us suppose that they turned their attention on themselves, and dwelt during the first five or six courses of the fish upon their own shortcomings. Starting with a brilliant programme of proposed social and sanitary legislation in the month of February, they have arrived at the conclusion of the session without having passed a single measure of anything like first-rate importance. There is probably not a human being, except the new inspectors to be appointed at considerable salaries to stop unseaworthy ships, who will be either better or worse, happier or unhappier, healthier or unhealthier, for the legislation of the session. If the session had been a blank in reality as it must be in history, the English world would have suffered nothing, as, by the weary work of the session, it has gained nothing. The Prime Minister has damaged his reputation as a statesman. Sir Charles Adderley has proved his incompetency for any public position except that of a peer of the realm. Mr. Ward Hunt has shown that a large physical frame does not always contain a generous disposition and a magnanimous character. The other Ministers have given evidence of an activity in their several departments, sometimes but not always well directed, and not one of them has shown any capacity for filling the place of leader of the House of Commons, which must ere long be vacant. Their supporters, or rather their nominal supporters, are still in a considerable majority in the House, and some of the old party discipline remains. But want of confidence in a leader very soon produces faulty discipline in his followers. Early in the session there were indications of unruliness among the men who sit below the Ministerial gangway, and before the end of it there was as much hostile criticism from the Ministerial side of the House as from the Opposition. Outside the House of Commons, from one end of England to the other, there came up unpleasant but not uncertain sounds. Meetings have been held in many places to protest against the inefficient conduct of affairs, and resolutions condemnatory of the Ministry have been freely carried. The sacrifice of the interests of the sailors, who are dear to the people, in favor of tenant-farmers, who are not regarded with sentimental feelings, has taken possession of the popular imagination. Mr. Plimsoll is for the moment the god of the popular idolatry. He has extinguished Dr. Kenealy even in the affections of the lowest of "the residuum," and he has inflicted a serious and lasting blow upon the character of the government of Mr. Disraeli.

And now let us suppose a turn in the conversation from politics to commerce, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer may be imagined to have introduced the topic of the Foreign Loans Committee, which he first opposed, and then reluctantly, under the pressure of his supporters, sanctioned. The frauds which have been exposed by this Committee were not perpetrated during the past session, it is true, but the public have learned during the session that in the heart of this virtuous England, and mainly in the city of London, swindling transactions on the largest scale are carried out by the agency of the Stock Exchange not only with impunity, but almost without discredit. English firms and English Members of Parliament have been found to sell their good names without any hesitation to foreign adventurers and swindlers. They have accepted bribes from needy blacklegs, and helped them to impose upon and rob their fellow-countrymen and countrywomen, and these firms are still regarded with consideration, and these Members of Parliament still sit in the House of Commons and take part in the deliberations for the welfare of the country.

And turning from commercial to social backslidings, what pictures of English life have been exhibited this season! Gambling on a great scale goes on, we are told, in many of the best clubs in London and in private houses tenanted by leaders of the aristocracy and of the fashionable world, and along with rumors of gambling come uglier rumors of unfair play, oozing up from time to time like the bubbles of a polluted fountain. One officer of the army, the scion of a noble house, was cashiered a few months ago for not doubtful dealings in a public room at Cannes. Another officer, late of the Guards, was driven to make a vain attempt to establish his character in a court of law against a charge of unfair play in a railway carriage. An official holding one of the most coveted offices in London had to resign his office and disappear, on account of an accusation of something more than strange dexterity at whist in one of the most select clubs in London—an accusation tendered by some of the most leading men in

England; and ladies, even, have not escaped the ugly contagion both of fair and unfair play. But over this dark part of this imaginary Ministerial conversation let us trust that the President of the Council would call upon his colleagues to draw a veil. Mr. Hardy, however, the Minister for War, we may suppose, could hardly divert the conversation from the scandal caused the other day by the outrageous conduct of a distinguished cavalry officer—a scandal which shows that it would be hazardous indeed to scratch too deep below the surface of our boasted civilization, and also, perhaps, that the precautions taken by prudent mothers to protect their daughters from too much contact with the world are not unreasonable. Of course the Minister of War cannot be held responsible for the brutalities perpetrated by any officer in the army. But this startling incident in the military life of modern England is one that could not fail to be mentioned in the retrospect which I have endeavored to imagine. Neither must I omit from this unpleasant catalogue the latest incident of crime—the fraud and flight of Alexander Collie. We have no Minister of Finance in England. The nearest approach to such an officer, being the President of the Board of Trade, is Sir Charles Adderley. I do not know whether he is responsible for the framing of the following advertisement, which appeared in the second column of the *Times* on Tuesday last, but, if he is, it is the most creditable thing he has done this session:

“ONE THOUSAND POUNDS REWARD.—Absconded, by not surrendering to his bail on the 9th of August instant, and recharged on a warrant issued on that day with conspiracy to defraud the London and Westminster Bank, by false pretences, Alexander Collie, late of 17 Leadenhall Street, London; Aytoun Street, Manchester; No. 12 Kensington Palace Gardens, and Dover House, Roehampton, in the County of Surrey, Merchant and Commission Agent. Description: Age fifty-two years, height six feet, hair reddish-brown (turning grey, cut short), whiskers reddish, and complexion florid; high cheek-bones, eyes small; has a deep scar on upper lip extending towards the cheek; dresses well in dark clothes, tall hat, walks erect, square shoulders, rather thin build; a native of Scotland. The above reward of £1,000 will be paid for the reappearance, or such information as shall lead to the reappearance, of the said Alexander Collie. Information to be given to Inspector Bailey, City of London Police, Detective Department, 26 Old Jewry, E. C.—9th August, 1875.”

Alexander Collie, the subject of this advertisement, laid the foundations of his colossal dealings, as I understand, in a series of more or less successful ventures in blockade-running during your great war. Since then, like so many men of humble origin and imperfect education who have battened on commercial speculations, he has lived a life of vulgar ostentation, struggling like the frog in the fable to expand his petty existence to the dimensions of those who were to the manner born. Like his prototype, he has gone off with an ugly explosion, ending not unfitly, as an outlaw from his country, a speculative career which commenced under such sinister auspices. He is the last of the British blockade-runners. They have all gone to a bad commercial end, and he has gone to more utter ruin than any of the others.

But now we may imagine the Ministerial banquet drawing to its end. The large embossed basin filled with rose-water—an unvarying feature of a Greenwich dinner—is being handed round, and such guests as may wish to dip their napkins in diluted hair-oil have an opportunity of doing so. The Prime Minister of England rises to move the adjournment to the Terrace, and, after congratulating his colleagues on their successful session and their agreeable conversation during the evening, he modestly announces that, politically, commercially, and socially, England never was sounder than at the present moment, under the present Prime Minister and his Government, and he cheerfully calls upon the members of his Cabinet to join him in singing “*nunc dimittis*.”

THE GEOGRAPHICAL CONGRESS AT PARIS.

PARIS, August 11, 1875.

THE evening papers of to-day in New York should contain a telegram announcing that in the distribution of awards this afternoon by the Geographical Congress some six or eight of the first honors, in letters of distinction and in gold medals, were accorded to institutions and citizens of the United States. At least, I presume to hope that the telegraphic bureau has deemed such national honors worthy of immediate publicity, and that for many Americans they will have a higher significance than prizes won in a boat-race or a rifle-match; though I have no idea that prominent merchants, bankers, and editors of New York will subscribe for a dinner complimentary to the successful contestants in this high arena of science, nor that politicians will devise a procession in their honor. But, whatever satisfaction and pride you at home may extract from the compli-

ment paid by the jury of the Congress to American science and skill, the two or three deputies who sat as members of the Congress for the United States found every day some fresh cause for humiliation at the meagre figure which their country presented at this general court of the scientific world.

More than a year ago, the Geographical Society of Paris, pursuant to the action of the first Congress, held at Antwerp in 1871, decided to convoke at Paris a second International Congress, representing geography and its affiliated sciences, and appointed a bureau, of which the Vice-Admiral Baron de la Roncière-le-Noury was president, to make the necessary arrangements. In issuing the call, the term “geography” was used in the broadest sense, to include geodesy, hydrography, meteorology, botany, zoology, anthropology, ethnography, philology, topography, cartography, statistics, explorations, and discoveries; and arrangements were made for an exposition of books, maps, instruments, and materials used in and derived from the service of geography in all these subdivisions; in a word, here was a platform upon which men of science, travel, and research, from all parts of the world, could come together, share each other's knowledge, and plan for further conquests in the common domain of man and his abode. In this enterprise the Geographical Society of Paris was warmly seconded by the Government of France, and invitations were issued in a liberal spirit to the governments and the learned bodies of foreign countries to participate in the Congress and contribute to the Exposition. The Government of the United States declined to do anything in the matter, either by an appropriation of money and materials or by the designation of commissioners. The American Geographical Society appointed a small delegation to represent it in the Congress, and, by dint of much entreaty, at the very last moment the Government consented to recognize certain of the Society's appointees as commissioners, in order to give them a status, on the express condition that they should in no wise represent the Government, nor incur any liabilities upon its account. Restricted in this manner, an American physician of Paris, and Prof. Nourse of Washington, with one or two other deputies of the American Geographical Society, represented as best they could the scientific work of America at their personal cost and trouble. And what was the consequence? An entire wing of the Tuileries was filled with the apparatus and the results of geographical science—each nation having a section of its own, in which its geographical work was set up for inspection and for comparison with others. It was a superb collection, truly a marvellous display, and fitted to impress one profoundly with the nurture that different peoples have given to science, and the fruits with which that nurture has rewarded them. This long series of halls was one continuous lecture upon comparative civilization. Well, after wandering through them for hours, studying the catalogue, and questioning the guides, the American might stumble at last upon the place to which his country had consigned herself in this competitive Exposition—a room eight feet by twelve, in an obscure corner of the building, containing the charts of the Coast Survey, Gen. Myer's weather charts, Gen. Walker's Statistical Atlas, the United States Census, Col. Hayden's reports, a few volumes of statistics, and a few photographs of public buildings! It was no fault of the committee that the United States were shoved into this insignificant corner; they gave us all the room we needed, and as good as we deserved; and, as above stated, each and every form of scientific labor represented in that tiny collection received some token of approbation from the jury. It was our own fault that we had so little to exhibit, and nobody to explain what was there.

Then, in the Congress itself, our status was still more unpronounced—in fact, it was just nothing at all. More than fifteen hundred members of the Congress were enrolled. These were divided into seven sections for the discussion of classified questions, and every afternoon the whole body met to hear reports of the morning's work of the sections. Having given in my credentials and joined a section, I set out upon a tour of observation to find my colleagues, whose names I knew only from a chance paragraph in the *New York Herald*. For three days I searched in vain for an American face or name, and many a question and joke did I have to parry as to the paucity of our representation and the insignificance of our collection, until I had the comfort of stumbling upon a brother delegate, and finding that he had been suffering the same disappointment and mortification. At length we were able to count up in all some four or five American names in the fifteen hundred of the Congress. The whole deputation could have been shut up with the American collection in the aforementioned room of eight feet by twelve.

The French committee, with admirable fairness, had arranged to have the several nations represented in the central bureau and the vice-presidencies, and on the opening day there were speeches from Germany, England, Russia, Holland, Italy, Hungary, Belgium, Switzerland, Egypt; but,

through our defect of representation, the name of the United States was not so much as mentioned. On each succeeding day the presiding officer was chosen from the different nationalities in turn, but on no occasion did this distinction fall to the lot of an American. In the several sections the chairmen were chosen daily from different nationalities, but no member from the United States was ever called to fill the chair of a group. Most important discussions were had in the sections, and abstracts of these will be given in the official report; but, alas! how little can be credited to members from the United States. By its own indifference it came justly to pass that from beginning to end our country was counted out. The American delegates were far too few to assert themselves, and those who appeared had not been chosen altogether upon scientific grounds, but from considerations of convenience and to fill up chinks; they were zealous in doing their part; but when they entered the Congress they found America was *all* a chink, and so had to go under. That is the case as it was.

In contrast with our actual appearance at Paris, it is easy to see what might have been done, and ought to have been done, on such an opportunity. (1) The Government of the United States, having contributed so much to the advancement of science by explorations in the South Seas and in the Arctic Ocean, in South America, Central America, and in Palestine, by surveys in the interior and along the coast of its own territory, by deep-sea searchings and astronomical observations, might have sent a complete set of its own publications in charge of a person competent to exhibit them. Whatever the theory of the functions of government, no one would have thought of complaining if the Government had made a full exhibit of its own scientific work to a Congress of the scientific world. If it is not competent to do that, why should it have ever encouraged science at all? Instead of this, the Government, or some official, sent three paltry boxes, and left a private gentleman in Paris to pay all the expense of having their contents suitably displayed.

(2) If the Government at Washington could not directly make appropriations toward such an exhibition, the Secretary of State should at once have given publicity to the invitation to the Congress, and with his moral sanction have commended it to the governments and the scientific bodies of the several States. In that case, several States might have been represented by a full report of their geological and topographical surveys and their industrial resources, and thus there would have been a proximate representation of what the United States are, and have accomplished, in a geographical point of view.

(3) The merchants and bankers of New York should have placed at the disposal of the American Geographical Society a fund of ten thousand dollars, by means of which the Society could have furnished a "round ticket" for the trip to Paris to twenty gentlemen, selected impartially from the whole country, as the foremost representatives of science. Such gentlemen are not apt to have means to spare for so long a journey in the public interest; and the Geographical Society, while most earnest for the success of the Congress, had no funds for such a commission. Twenty men of repute in science, or even ten, with the proper auxiliaries of books, charts, and instruments, would have placed the United States upon an equality with any nation in the Congress in branches of science where we have no reason to fear competition. The honor we did achieve in the Exposition by even our scanty showing would have been increased tenfold by the presence of such men in the Congress itself. As it was, we seemed to be distanced not only by France, Germany, and England, but by Russia, Switzerland, and Belgium. It is more than a pity, it is a shame, that so rare an opportunity for exhibiting the better side of our nation has been heedlessly thrown away. At a time, too, when we are counting Europe for our Centennial Exposition, we had need to show a spirit of international courtesy. Many Frenchmen and Germans have said to me here, "How can you expect us to go over to your Exposition next year if you care so little for this?"

J. P. T.

Correspondence.

THE UNIVERSITY OF JENA.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: The last number of the *Independent* contains the following paragraph:

"Mr. J. M. Hart, in his volume on 'German Universities,' has this sentence: 'Jena is, I believe, the only university in Germany which degrades itself by selling its degrees to foreign applicants.' The passage has just

been brought to the notice of the Jena professors, who are much disturbed by it, since the statement, though doubtless made in good faith, is totally unfounded. We have received direct and reliable information from Jena, which satisfies us that Mr. Hart has done a great injustice to one of the best of the German universities. . . . We need only mention the names of Schrader, Grimm, Hilgenfeld, Haeckel, Schmidt, etc., to show the intrinsic falsehood of Mr. Hart's statement."

The wording of the above is such as to excite some wonderment. The readers of a semi-religious paper like the *Independent* may reasonably look for more skill in casuistry. If an author's statements are "doubtless made in good faith," it is scarcely logical to brand them with "intrinsic falsehood"; if they are intrinsically false, it is mere euphemism to make good faith the empty compliment before the blow.

But it would be wasting time to quarrel longer over words, so long as the facts are against me. I have been assured by private information from Germany—doubtless the same information that crept into the *Independent*—that my charge against Jena is unfounded. The information is of the highest order, and not to be suspected for a moment. I hasten, therefore, to remedy the injustice, so far as that is now possible, by publicly withdrawing herewith the charge, and promising to correct it in future editions of the 'German Universities.' I must add—and herein you, Mr. Editor, will bear me witness—that this retraction had been promised by me a fortnight ago, voluntarily, and before I had reason to suspect that the *Independent* was possessed of any information on the subject.

Suffer me to clear my skirts a little more. The present faculty of Jena assert explicitly that they do not sell diplomas. I accept their declaration and admit that my words of last year, so far as they have any present bearing, are wrong and unjust. But the case was not always thus. For many years, even down to my own student-days, the Jena faculty did sell diplomas. A Jena graduate, now residing in Philadelphia, wrote to me some months ago as follows:

"I received the diploma of M.D. in 1864. During the time I was there I learned that up to 1860 the old faculty did sell diplomas of Ph.D. to foreign applicants without examination, but this pernicious practice was entirely broken up by the Government retiring the old faculty and forming a new one. Prof. Schulz, the dean of the medical faculty, told me at the time how the old faculty had degraded the institution, but that the new one had eradicated the blot upon its escutcheon by their strict obedience to the regular forms of the other universities," etc.

It will appear from this that my words in the 'German Universities' had at least some foundation. The mistake that I made is one that is liable to occur in every book of an autobiographical character; the writer is always in danger of confounding his recollections with the changed facts of the present. My charges against Jena were based upon the local tradition current at Göttingen from 1860 to 1864.

It is scarcely necessary to dwell upon the deep regret which I feel both for myself and for the Jena professors whose susceptibilities have been wounded. May they accept this apology in the spirit in which it is offered, with the assurance that it has given me sincere pleasure to learn of the changed state of affairs. Something surely can be overlooked in a work the whole animus of which is admiration and friendship for the German universities. Perhaps this public adjustment of the grievance may, after all, be productive of good by vindicating the dignity of Jena more fully than ever before.—Yours very respectfully,

J. M. HART.

AUGUST 16, 1875.

"THE ELEMENTS OF ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION."

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: In your recent review of Professor Whitney's Essays you say he "describes the vowel sound of *they* as a slide beginning with *e* in *let* and ending in *i* in *pin*. He gives the same sound in *fate*, *fail*, *great*, *they*. We make this slide in *they* uttered alone, but make no *i*-vanish in *fate*, *fail*, *great*, or in *they* prefixed—*they came*, *they ran*." Are you positive about this? Careless assertions are not frequent enough in the *Nation* to encourage the assumption that you have not carefully observed your own utterance of these words; yet I can more easily suppose your ear does not detect all the sounds you utter than believe you pronounce *fate*, for instance, so flatly as you must if you really make no *i*-vanish. I come to this conclusion—(1) because few English-speaking people detect this *i*-vanish in any of our words; (2) because, since I learned to distinguish this sound myself, I have found it frequently a good shibboleth to detect a foreigner, it appearing about equally difficult for us to omit, and for the Continental student to pronounce, the *i*-vanish; and (3) because I cannot pronounce this word *fate* with three sounds without modifying the position of the tongue during the utterance of the second, which I surely could do if the latter were a

simple sound. Let us substitute carefully for this *a* the *e* of *let*, or, more exactly, the continental *e*, and there results *fet*, similar to *let* with the *e* prolonged, which is very unsatisfactory, and unlike any pronunciation of *fate* I ever heard from the mouth of an American.

My native dialect should be the same as that of your reviewer, for I am a native of Harvard, Massachusetts, and a graduate of Harvard College. Up to the time of my going abroad after my graduation I had never received any intimation that either *ä*, *î*, *ë*, or *ü* was a compound sound. When, therefore, a teacher of vocal music, in Germany, could not tolerate my pronunciation of the German *e*, which I pronounced like our "long *a*," it was equally impossible for me to understand the nature of the defect in my pronunciation, and for him to explain it. My utmost endeavor to imitate his utterance of this simple sound was futile until my own ear became trained to distinguish in my pronunciation the furtive *i* which I had invariably added.

Two years later I had a French teacher in Paris, who spoke English with the usual defects of a Frenchman. His pronunciation of *fate* was peculiarly painful to me. It sounded exceedingly flat in his mouth, and his efforts to improve it by simply imitating the correctly-pronounced word were unavailing. When, however, I analyzed the word for him, and directed him to pronounce it slowly at first, and in two syllables (*fä-t*, using the *i* of pique, not of *pin* for the vanish), bringing them more and more closely together till they were pronounced as rapidly as possible, then he pronounced *fate* as well as any American. The same method has yielded the same result many times since.

By these observations I became thoroughly convinced that to omit this *i*-vanish in our "long *a*" was conclusive evidence of a mother tongue whose alphabet lacked such a compound, and that to pronounce the Continental *e* with this *i*-vanish added was equally significant of an English or American origin. This conviction has been much strengthened by teaching American students to pronounce German and French. Every class, and as far as I remember every individual, has required considerable persistent training in order to establish the habit of pronouncing the *e* and *o* of the Continental languages without adding the vanish of the corresponding English vowels.

Professor A. Graham Bell, of Boston University, son of the inventor of "visible speech," justly remarks, in an article in *Old and New*, that "when teachers themselves know *what they do* in speaking well, the correction of all peculiarities of utterance will be a matter of little difficulty." At present many of our language teachers, if asked *what they do* when they pronounce *o*, would only be able to reply with Molière's *Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, "Mais, je dis *o*." Is not this ignorance the chief of the lions that seem to stop the road to a reformed spelling? Then come these formidable dialects to be conquered and harmonized. Against such foes Professor Whitney's essays and your review of them are the best of ammunition. These notes from my personal experience are given, not so much from any fear that the wrong view of the letter considered will ultimately prevail, as from a conviction that only by discussions of this character can we develop that phonetic sense which must precede a phonetic orthography.

W. C. SAWYER.

MINNEAPOLIS, MINN., July 8, 1875.

[There is a warm discussion going on among the masters of phonetics, in England, about this *a* in *say*, *fate*. Mr. Ellis insists on the sound which he marks *ee*. He "deprecates much" Mr. Bell's insisting on *ei*. But Mr. Bell and Mr. Murray hear the *i*-vanish from Mr. Ellis's own mouth. Very likely our correspondent would hear it from ours. We have had experience with foreigners similar to his. The facts seem to us to be that the French and German *e*, like our *e* in *let*, is made with the organs a little further open than *a* in *late*, and the sound of *i* in *pique* is made with the same organs a little nearer closed than *a* in *late*; so when one is making *e* in *let*, if you tell him to add to it the sound of *i* in *pique*, he will in doing it pass through the sound of *a* in *late*, and will recognize it, and soon learn to hold it. Telling a man to add an *i*-sound to *e*, is in effect directing him to a closer sound; telling him to avoid an *i*-vanish, is practically a direction to make a more open sound. Our correspondent's difficulty in making *fate* with three sounds perhaps arises from the fact that the tongue is raised for the *t*, and so does really with him educe the full *i*-vanish, though it does not with us. Perhaps if he tries *ape* he will find that he can hold his tongue

steady and unmoved for *e* while he closes the lips for *p*. The Dutch are having a quite similar dispute over their *e* sound.—ED. NATION.]

THE NAPOLEON OF THE BANK OF CALIFORNIA.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: I ask permission to correct, through your unbiased paper, certain comments which have been made during the past few days by a part of the press (the *New York Tribune* among others) on the failure of the Bank of California and its president. They would have seemed utterly heartless to one at least of their readers, if he had not remembered that ignorance of facts is often no hindrance to the most confident assertion of editorial opinion.

The gist of the moralizing was that Napoleons are no more to be desired in the financial than in the political world. I beg leave to say, as one who, from earliest recollection, has been indebted to Mr. Ralston for countless kindnesses; as one who has known his life at home and at business, that so far as the qualities (which all men admire), strength of will, accuracy of judgment, and great power of execution, are concerned, he was Napoleonic; but if selfishness is ascribed to him as the governing motive of his conduct, I deny it as untrue. It is true that Mr. Ralston possessed a wonderful farsightedness, a singular rapidity and soundness of judgment and great executive power, and he might well have said of these qualities, as John Stuart Mill said of his early training, that they enabled him to start with an advantage of a quarter of a century over his contemporaries; for he was able both to plan and to execute, while ordinary men were still *thinking* of planning. But it is *not* true that these great powers were employed by him for selfish ends.

It is one thing to accumulate millions in such a manner that honest people, who have the interests of worthy and needy institutions at heart, shall be in constant dread lest these vast sums be ultimately converted into a single tissue-paper bond, and so swallowed by the possessor as a pill on his death-bed. But it is another and far different thing to use one's accumulated wealth in whole-souled devotion to the development of an immature State; in lending aid to industries which, having been at first unsuccessful, nobody else had foresight enough to regard as anything but hopeless failures. It was thus that Mr. Ralston, unaided, rescued from their financial embarrassment the woollen mills and the Kimball carriage and car manufactory—two enterprises which have since won credit for California, and by their success have encouraged manufacturing projects in other directions.

It is one thing, also, to have (as one of Mr. Ralston's associates had) a reputed daily income of \$10,000. But it is another thing to prefer, as Mr. Ralston did, to such an income—which, if the other had it, he might himself equally have had—the expenditure of his money in encouraging artists, in aiding charitable institutions, in giving every imaginable pleasure to friends, in sending his own horses and carriages for the use of invalid friends who were travelling in parts of California where the most comfortable conveyances were not to be had, and in extending to strangers a bounteous hospitality not outdone by Nature herself when she welcomed the first strangers to that land.

Some of the newspapers have said that he lived in a luxurious style unprecedented in the history of bank cashiers. True; but it was for others' pleasure, not his own. It was not for *his* use that nearly a dozen varieties of choice wines and every delicacy known to cookery appeared on his table. And when he entertained his guests with music and dancing, and invariably excused himself at ten o'clock to rise again at six, everybody well understood how essential was this regular rest for his unceasing work. Prior to the building of a railroad, and for a short while after its completion, he was accustomed to take recreation in driving daily from his country-place to and from the city (twenty-five miles), changing horses half-way. But of late years his increasing work has rarely allowed him to be more than once a week at home, where his horses have still remained in constant service for others' pleasure. This was some small part of his unselfishness and care for others' interests which his late failure would seem to belie, but which, when balanced with his warrantable self-confidence, will not appear diminished. He was a leader because none were so fit to lead as he. He was the Bank of California because the directors were well aware that he was far better able to promote their interests than they themselves, and that they were better fitted to go through the formality of ratifying his acts than to impede his action by questioning his judgment. If this is the stuff Napoleons are made of, surely, sir, you must join me in hoping that the world may have more of them.

A. A. WHEELER.

CAMBRIDGE, MASS., August 30, 1875.

Notes.

A NEW publishing firm, of Joseph H. Coates & Co., has been formed in Philadelphia, Mr. Coates having withdrawn from the firm of Porter & Coates. The two houses are under one roof, and will have intimate business relations.—The *Independent* of Aug. 26 gives a number of Cypriot inscriptions from the remains in the Cesnola Collection, with their Greek and English equivalents furnished by Mr. Isaac H. Hall. Most of them relate to votive offerings.—The *Athenæum* states that the publication of the second volume of Corssen's work on the Etruscan language will not be delayed by the death of the lamented author. It was, in fact, already in print, needing only revision and an index. He leaves an unfinished work in MS., 'Beiträge zur italischen Sprachkunde,' which will also shortly appear.—The second *Abtheilung* of the second volume of Marquardt and Mommsen's 'Römische Alterthümer' has been issued. No less than 360 pages are devoted to the *Princeps*, or Emperor, his subordinates and administration. If this is not an entirely new field, we are not aware that it has ever before been thoroughly or systematically worked; certainly not in the light of the new scholarship. It has a very great importance as connecting the republican institutions, with which we are pretty familiar, with those of modern times.—*Nature*, July 29, in an article on the regulation of rivers, apropos of the recent disastrous floods in Europe, recalls a paper, pretty much forgotten in this country, by the late Charles Ellett, jr., on the "Physical Geography of the Mississippi Valley, with suggestions for the improvement of the navigation of the Ohio and other rivers." It appeared in the 'Smithsonian Contributions to Knowledge' for 1851, and would seem to be worth reviving. Mr. Ellett proposed a system of reservoirs for the purpose both of keeping a uniform depth of water on the shoals and bars, and of taking off the excess of freshets.

—*Lippincott's Magazine* for September contains a sprightly paper, by Mrs. Sarah B. Wister, entitled "A Roccoco Love-Story," for which the recently-published correspondence of the Chevalier de Boufflers and Mme. de Sabran furnished the material. If that beauty's portrait could have been added from the same source, the readers of the magazine would have had still greater reason to be thankful. Mrs. Lynn Linton begins a new serial, "The Atonement of Leam Dundas." "Our Architectural Future," by Edward C. Bruce, is written with more than the usual intelligence of writers who approach this theme, and still seems to fail of conveying his own ideas with distinctness. He is misled and confused, as other less cultivated men are constantly, by the assumed necessity of giving or finding a name for every architectural design. Thus he is an advocate of what he calls the Romanesque, and an opponent of the so-called Gothic style; and yet he says that the eclecticism which assumes the latter name in this country has generally at the root of it "the idea of fitness, convenience, and adaptedness to practical purpose." Now what difference does it make whether the architect who is governed by this idea, which, we need not say, is the capital stock of the genuine builder, does or does not consider his design "pure Gothic," or is or is not aware that he is on the road to the "Romanesque"? And what praise or blame is it to point out to him "Greek lines and forms permeating" his construction, and "abundant souvenirs of Vitruvius"? The laws of proportion and the necessary directions of straight lines will of course produce resemblances in the architecture of nations the most distant from one another; but the school which works out its designs from use and fitness knows that it is only taking its own and not another's property. And let it be, as Mr. Bruce would have it, that our American sun and sky will sooner or later bring us to the building for which the Levant furnishes the model; the result, if it is a rational one, may be reached by the unconscious efforts of architects who have learned the lessons (for all countries and all times) of honest construction only from the Gothic monuments of Belgium and northern France. "Our people have at bottom a juster and sounder sense of the beautiful than the northern races of Europe. They show it in the superior elegance of their public parks, vehicles, and vessels, and will increasingly evince it on the broader and finer field of architecture." They will do so only when they can be made to understand that the same principles underlie the building of a cathedral as of a "clipper" or a "buggy," and to pay as little regard to the name of the style in the one case as in the other.

—Mr. William Page contributes to the last *Scribner's* a very elaborate argument to prove that the German death-mask of Shakspeare (which he is using as the basis for his ideal portrait of the poet) is authentic, and in fact the most authentic likeness in existence. He admits that the evidence for the pedigree of the mask is wanting, but maintains on internal grounds

that the case can be made out. There is no doubt that he is absolutely convinced of the correctness of his conclusions, and, if his article had been thrown into a somewhat colder and more logical form, there can be no doubt either that it would by itself, and in the absence of contrary arguments, produce a very weighty impression. The evidence is of a kind, however, that it would require a jury of experts to weigh properly, with a strong probability that they would, like most æsthetic experts, fail to agree from having made up their minds beforehand *pro* or *con*. There is, too, something about the subject of Shakspeare so fascinating to the imagination of anybody who begins the study of it that there is no saying how long he will be able to keep his feet on the solid ground of fact, without wandering off into speculations which have not a shadow of foundation. We know of at least one investigator who, without having yet been locked up in a lunatic asylum, brings out every few years a new edition of a work proving Shakspeare to have been none other than Lord Bacon, and this author has himself merely followed out logically the ingenious foot-steps of those who discovered before him that Shakspeare was the real discoverer of the circulation of the blood—to cite one of a dozen examples. The recollection of Judge Holmes's wonderful excursus makes us somewhat chary of believing at once any startling addition to Shaksperian learning; but we must admit that Mr. Page's investigations are very interesting, and that his head, or rather the photograph he has reproduced from the mask, is a fine and noble one. He assumes, if we correctly understand him, the Droeshout print, the Chandos portrait, and the Stratford bust as all being more or less faithful representations of Shakspeare, and then, by measurements and comparisons of peculiar marks, shows that the mask is the most Shaksperian of all. Of twenty-six measurements of the mask, as for example of the distance between the eyebrows, between the inner corners of the eyes and the outer corners of the eyes (Mr. Page gives the measures themselves in the article), "at least ten or twelve fit exactly corresponding points of the Stratford bust," and "few persons need be told that this planet never did, at any one moment, contain two adult heads whose faces agreed in any dozen like measures, and the law of probabilities makes it remote when such an epoch will arrive. To a working artist's mind, the agreement of these measures is either a miracle or demonstration that they are from the same face."

—The several thousand or hundred thousand persons, young and old, of both sexes, in the United States who were amusing themselves a short time ago with contests in spelling, will be interested in an article in the *Atlantic* called "A Patriotic Schoolmaster," by Mr. Horace E. Scudder. The patriotic schoolmaster in question was no other than Webster, of 'Webster's Unabridged,' and the facts with regard to him which Mr. Scudder recalls throw a curious light on our educational past. Dr. Webster belonged to the generation immediately succeeding that of "the founders," and he was by nature an educator. He was also, like all others of his time, an ardent patriot, and he seems to have been one of that body of misguided men who first set this country thinking about the possibility of producing not only an American government, but American morals, American political economy, American art, American letters, and even an American language. At first he began moderately with a Reader, the title-page of which contained this direction for the guidance of parents and teachers, taken from Mirabeau: "Begin with the infant in his cradle; let the first word he lisps be 'Washington,'" and in the preface to which the editor says:

"In the choice of pieces, I have been attentive to the political interests of America. I consider it as a capital fault in all our schools, that the books generally used contain subjects wholly uninteresting to our youth; while the writings that marked the Revolution, which are perhaps not inferior to the orations of Cicero and Demosthenes, and which are calculated to impress interesting truths upon young minds, lie neglected and forgotten. Several of those masterly addresses of Congress, written at the commencement of the late Revolution, contain such noble sentiments of liberty and patriotism that I cannot help wishing to transfuse them into the breasts of the rising generation."

But as he went on he became more and more advanced in his views, insisting, in an essay on the Manners, Government, and Debt of the United States, that "a fundamental mistake of the Americans has been that they considered the Revolution as completed when it was but just begun," and adding significantly, "This country is independent in government, but totally dependent in manners, which are the basis of government." In morals, fashions, and modes of speech, he discovered a slavish subserviency to Europe. Patriotism gradually getting the better of Dr. Webster, his interest in the reform of language, which was indeed genuine, became curiously confounded with political interests, until, in an essay on the necessity, advantages, and practicability of reforming the mode of spelling

and of rendering the orthography of words correspondent to their pronunciation, we find the following extraordinary passage :

"A capital advantage of this reform," he says, "in these States would be, that it would make a difference between the English orthography and the American. This will startle those who have not attended to the subject ; but I am confident that such an event is an object of vast political consequence. For the alteration, however small, would encourage the publication of books in our own country. It would render it in some measure necessary that all books should be printed in America. The English would never copy our orthography for their own use ; and consequently the same impressions of books would not answer for both countries. The inhabitants of the present generation would read the English impressions ; but posterity, being taught a different spelling, would prefer the American orthography. Besides this, a *national language* is a bond of *national union*. Every engine should be employed to render the people of this country *national* ; to call their attachments home to their own country ; and to inspire them with the pride of national character. . . . Let us then seize the present moment, and establish a *national language* as well as a national government. Let us remember that there is a certain respect due to the opinions of other nations. As an independent people, our reputation abroad demands that in all things we should be federal, be *national*, for if we do not respect *ourselves* we may be assured that *other nations* will not respect us. In short, let it be impressed upon the mind of every American that to neglect the means of commanding respect abroad is treason against the character and dignity of a brave, independent people."

—Some of the changes in spelling introduced by this patriotic enthusiast have, as Mr. Seudder says, been adopted in this country, if not in England, and there are probably few educated Americans who still write *honour*, *labour*, or *cheque*, though down to within a few years we remember *publick* and *critick* to have been preserved by Virginia purists. On the other hand, some of his most cherished reforms, as indicated in the following sample of reformed English—

"The reader will obzerv," he says, "that the orthography of the volum iz not uniform. The reazon iz that many of the essays hav been published before, in the common orthography, and it would hav been a laborious task to copy the whole for the sake of changing the spelling. In the essays ritten within the last year, a considerable change of spelling iz introduced by way of experiment"—

have not been adopted altogether into the vernacular. In connection with this article, the reader will find another on the "Spelling of the Future" in the current number of the *Galaxy*, by Mr. Richard Grant White, in which he considers the subject apropos of the appointment of a committee by the American Philological Association on phonetic reform, which Mr. White considers neither necessary nor desirable nor possible. If what is contemplated by the reformers is a general revolution in the English spelling, they may find in the reformatory efforts of Dr. Webster some food for reflection, there being always one great obstacle in the way, which is sure to make any change slow and to prevent any violent *saltus*—we mean the absence of any final authority on the subject. When we remember that we have not even an Academy, and are accustomed, too, on most occasions, to thank heaven that we have not, it must be obvious that the amount of resistance to any change proposed *ex cathedra* is simply incalculable, for it amounts to the whole force of custom in a population very tenacious of custom, while the force the innovation has behind it is the convenience, not of the generation now on the stage, but of those to come. That changes will always be taking place in the English language Mr. White does not deny ; but he insists that they will be in the future, as they have been in the past, gradual, and not introduced on the gigantic scale contemplated by Dr. Webster, whose reforms, as Mr. Seudder points out, have been successfully, though unconsciously, parodied by Mr. Josh Billings.

—In *Harper's Monthly* Mr. S. G. W. Benjamin follows in the footsteps of Mr. S. A. Drake, and treats pleasantly of one of the "nooks of the New England coast" neglected by the latter—namely, Gloucester and Cape Ann. Of the other illustrated papers two happen to relate to the tournament, *Porte Crayon's* describing the sham article at the South—wholly sham it would be except for the good horsemanship—and Mr. Edward Howland's the tournament of the Middle Ages. Mr. M. D. Conway begins a series of papers on the South Kensington Museum which promise to give untravelled readers a more definite notion than they have ever had of the scope of this wonderful institution. A ground plan, numerous views of exterior and interior, and of special objects, and portraits of the director, Mr. Cunliffe Owen, and of Sir Henry Cole, who may be called the creator as distinguished from the founder of the museum, adorn Mr. Conway's always interesting text. Mr. Parton arrives in his progress at recent English caricature, and gives numerous specimens of it from Cruikshank to Matt Morgan. The Centennial paper of the present number is by Prof. W. G.

Sumner, and relates to the monetary development of the Republic. It is a succinct chronological record of the financial measures, shifts, and disasters of the country from its first settlement (but more minutely from 1775) to the present day. The works necessary to consult for the desired information are for the most part (Mr. Sumner's own work is omitted) mentioned in the foot-notes, thus greatly enhancing the value of the paper for reference. The inflationist who reads it will have to confess that the "monetary development of the Republic" is not exactly the phase of our national growth on which we shall be urgently desirous to have foreigners fix their attention at the coming Exposition. We commend to him, whatever be the nature of his pet scheme for making something out of nothing, the following extract, the only one for which we can find room :

"The great fire of December, 1835, at New York led some to propose a bank of \$5,000,000 for the sufferers. Niles said, 'To make a bank is the grand panacea for every ill that can befall the people of the United States, and yet it adds not one cent to the capital of the community.'"

—Mr. John Hogg, the London publisher, sends us a printed "Caution to Publishers," being a summary account of the copyright case of *Van Voorst v. Hogg*. The circumstances were curious. The plaintiff is the proprietor of a work which appeared in 1837, called 'Yarrell's British Birds.' The defendant issued last fall a holiday-book of animals for children, under the title of the 'Parlor Menagerie,' and was greatly surprised on being presently accused by Mr. Van Voorst's solicitor of having been guilty of "piracy" in the use of fifty-one woodcuts, which, it was alleged, had been copied from illustrations in Yarrell's work. All these cuts, however, had already been published by Mr. Hogg in 'Our Feathered Families' as long ago as 1862-63 ; and what is more, they formed part of a lot of woodcuts purchased by Mr. Hogg's father in 1830 from the stock of a deceased Newcastle printer and publisher—67 of them being from the hand of Thomas Bewick, and 94 by two of his pupils. It is very clear that "piracy" is not the word to express Mr. Hogg's innocent part in the matter, even before one examines the question of the originality of the blocks themselves. The case being pressed, however, a laborious examination and comparison of the cuts was begun before the Master of the Rolls, but before it was half over a compromise was proposed by the plaintiff's counsel, and was accepted by Mr. Hogg, apparently to save expense. Each party paying its own costs, the latter agreed to omit the cuts in controversy from future editions of the 'Parlor Menagerie,' and to deposit the blocks in the Court of Chancery until the expiration of the copyright of 'Yarrell's British Birds,' which will take place in two or three years. It appeared in evidence that Yarrell had copied some of his birds (not among the fifty-one) "line for line, and feather for feather, from originals existing prior to 1837" ; that like most popular delineators of birds who have succeeded Bewick, he was indebted to this master for the best of his illustrations ; that the alleged copies had mainly superficial resemblances, such as naturally arise in copying from stuffed specimens or from characteristic attitudes of the living birds ; that the engraving of them was of an earlier school than Yarrell's ; and that the surroundings of the figures were entirely different in the two cases. The Master of the Rolls was satisfied that "the 'Parlor Menagerie' could in no way injure the plaintiff's book," and that "what he was asked to administer was 'extreme law.'" The legal questions opened up, however, were very peculiar, and he could only say that "every copyright case must be decided on its own special circumstances" ; and this being so, Mr. Hogg very properly cautions his colleagues in the book-trade against buying woodcuts without guarantee. He even found unavailing the plea that copying from woodcuts in a book was legal at the time when Bewick's pupil (Rieveley) did what copying from Yarrell could be proved.

—We find in the *North China Herald* (Shanghai, June 12) a review of the thirteenth annual report of the Peking Hospital by the physician-in-charge, Dr. Dudgeon. This gentleman appears to be a very effective missionary in his way, owing to his professional skill, his fluent command of the Chinese language, and his access to all classes of citizens in consequence of his honorary connection with the British Legation. From the highest to the lowest, he is in the habit of receiving kind looks, courtesy, and respect, and more substantial tokens of gratitude for his services rendered to individual patients. Fine pieces of silk, boxes of tea, jars of wine, cakes, fruit, scrolls, and money for his daughters are enumerated among his presents in the report.

"One reigning prince, the descendant of the celebrated Prince of the Tourgouth Tartars, sent 100 catties of rice, and on another occasion (and this last is by no means uncommon) a Chinese dinner, served up in innumerable little dishes. The same prince is preparing a handsome wooden

tablet for erection in the hospital. He has been cured of opium-smoking, and the thousand ills that sometimes follow in its train."

This cure is something of a specialty with Dr. Dudgeon. Adjoining the hospital is a little shop "for the sale of anti-opium pills and diffusion of knowledge." The first was the prime object of the shop, but it was frequented by so many literary persons that the doctor added a reading-room, and succeeded in disposing of a number of copies of various translations of scientific works and 7,000 of the pills. This bears a strong resemblance to the temperance coffee and reading-rooms of our Western civilization, though an anti-tobacco or anti-liquor pill of proper efficacy is still a desideratum. The steady increase in the importation of opium into this country (of a value in 1873 of \$630,437 for the Chinese in California) should lead some philanthropist to arrange with Dr. Dudgeon for a supply of his antidote.

THE BOOK OF MARCO POLO.*

II.

THE Italians were emphatically the travellers of the thirteenth century, and though foreign countries accessible only by sea were in general discovered by inhabitants of the Atlantic coast, yet Columbus, Vespucci, and Cabot were all Italians, and, as Burchardt observes, Italian scholars maintained a literary monopoly in cosmographical description even down to the end of the fifteenth century. Before the birth of Marco, his father and uncle had travelled and resided in the Asiatic provinces of the Greek Empire, whither they resorted "on a venture of trade," and had pushed their commercial campaigns into even remoter regions. Marco's accounts of the consideration which his older relatives as well as himself enjoyed with Eastern potentates, usually so jealous of Christians and foreigners, have been thought highly incredible, but these statements appear to be confirmed by other evidence; and, besides, the position of the family as merchants would serve rather to recommend than to discredit them in Oriental eyes. Commerce was never regarded in the East with the contempt in which it was held by Roman pride—a false pride, by the way, which has rendered it so difficult for modern scholars to extract out of the disdainful reticence of ancient writers any satisfactory notices of the important traffic which was carried on in the days of the Empire between Rome and Oriental countries hardly known even by name to the classic authors. On the contrary, trade, especially with foreign countries, was always an honorable profession in the East. Mohammed, the founder of Islamism, was a merchant, and we learn from Chardin that the kings and nobles of Persia dealt largely in silks, carpets, and precious stones.

In Polo's time, merchants seem to have found less difficulty in distant commercial expeditions than were encountered by trading caravans in the most civilized countries of Europe, where they were exposed to be ransomed and pillaged as often as they came in sight of a stronghold of one of the predatory barons who then infested the Christian world. Long after the time of Polo, the Moslems were less intolerant and barbarous than they became in the course of the wars of conquest which culminated, if they did not terminate, in the capture of Constantinople and the transfer of the seat of Ottoman empire from Anatolia to Rumelia. When, a hundred years after Polo's captivity at Genoa, the king and great lords of France were seeking the redemption of the French princes and nobles taken prisoners by Bayazid at the battle of Nicopolis, there was found no obstacle in the way of communication and negotiation with the conqueror at his capital of Broussa; and Froissart mentions several Christian merchants who appear to have enjoyed in that capital as great immunities as regular heralds, to have travelled and traded freely in Asia Minor, and even to have been honored with the personal acquaintance and favor of Bayazid himself. "Syr Dyne of Respode," says the old chronicler, "was alwayes in their counsailes [of the French lords], and he sayes ever that the marchautes Venisyas and Genowayes myght well helpe and ayde in that busynesse, for he sayes marchautes myght go whider they lyst, and day by day they passe and repasse, and dayly marchautes christened hath entercours with the Sarazins and exchange one with another their merchaundyze" ('Chronicle,' reprint, Lord Berners's translation, vol. ii., p. 123). And again: "Syr, the marchautes of Gennes and other isles are known over all, and occupye the trade of marchaundize in Quayre, in Alexandre, in Damas, in Damiat, in Turkey, and out in farre countreyes hethan, for as ye knowe well marchaundize flyeth over all the worlde" ('Chronicles,' ii., p. 221).

* The Book of Ser Marco Polo, the Venetian, concerning the Kingdoms and Marvels of the East. Newly Translated and Edited, with Notes, Maps, and other Illustrations, by Colonel Henry Yule, C.B., late of the Royal Engineers (Bengal). Second edition, revised, with the addition of new matter and many new illustrations. 2 vols. 8vo. London: John Murray. 1875.

Even in the seventeenth century Chardin writes that he, both as a merchant and as a Protestant Christian, could reside and travel in the heathen East in greater honor and with less molestation than in his native country, Catholic France, then under the "glorious" rule of the *grand monarque* Louis XIV.

The subject of the mutual intercourse and reciprocal influence of the East and the West is full of interest, and the labors of Heeren, Baldelli-Boni, Beauvoir-Priault, Weber, and others, among whom Reinaud, author of the learned '*Relations politiques et commerciales de l'Empire Romain avec l'Asie orientale*' (Paris, 1863), deserves especial notice, have by no means exhausted it. Mutually repugnant as the Asiatic and the Occidental have always been, they have never ceased to exercise upon each other, if not a sympathetic influence, a fascination like that of the serpent upon his victim. The current of this influence, like the migration of peoples and the course of empire, has generally set westwards, and the sure guide of language, as well as the constant traditions of the Western races, shows that the blood which tingles in our own veins comes by personal descent from tribes shone upon by the rising sun. To that source, too, we trace our religion and many of our laws and social institutions, though, like our languages, often so much disguised and changed as to be hardly now readily recognizable as kindred. The very word Oriental is with us symbolical of splendor and redolent with fragrance. The universal prejudice which led Columbus, by a happy error, to seek for Asia in the West, still survives in popular geography, and the Antilles are called the West Indies, as in Spain *Las Indias* is still the general designation of Spanish America. The hostile contact of the Hellenic with the Persian race in Asia Minor, and the repulse of Xerxes in his memorable attempt to subjugate Greece, the expedition of the Ten Thousand, and the wondrous campaign of Alexander, checked the influx of Oriental ideas, as well as the irruption of Eastern invaders into Europe; and, fleeting as were the "thrones, dominations, prince-doms, powers" into which the Macedonian conquests were divided, the moral and intellectual influence of this reversal of the tide of history is now known to have been substantial, widespread, and permanent. Alexander, under the names of Dhulkarnein [two-horned, Ammon] and Iskander, is still one of the demigods of Asiatic mythology, and late researches have pointed out coincidences between Greek and Asiatic art too striking to be accidental. The illustrations of Col. Yule's interesting and valuable '*Mission to Ava*' in 1855 show that even Burmese architecture in its decorative features, its mouldings, and its minor members, is wonderfully like the Hellenic. Here, certainly, the Greeks were not the borrowers.

The gems, and tissues, and dyes, and perfumes, and spices, and medicaments in which the Asiatic world is so rich, excited the cupidity of mediæval Europe as keenly as the "gold and silver and ivory and apes and peacocks" (*qu. ostrich plumes?*) of Tarshish did that of Solomon and his harem. Even the Scandinavian peddlers and pirates coasted the southern shores of the Mediterranean, cheating the Blámenn, or Moors, with hard bargains, or plundering them with the strong hand, according to circumstances, and though the reprisals of the Moslem on the Nazarene were generally confined to the Mediterranean, yet on several occasions, as late as the seventeenth century, Algerine corsairs returned the visits of the Vikings, landing in Norway, and even in Iceland, and carrying off hundreds of prisoners to toil and die in slavery. On the other hand, though Asiatic taste generally prefers the handiwork of its own artisans, yet the Orientals were not slow to adopt the weapons and other military improvements of the Europeans. The "Rumes" or Rumelian artillerymen and engineers whom Albuquerque and other Portuguese invaders of Southern India found in the service of the native princes, were as probably Greek or other Christian renegades as Turks, and even the mosaics of the Taj Mahal were certainly, in part at least, designed if not executed by Tuscan artists. Cunningly wrought glass is an old article of Venetian export to the East, and Chardin states that the art of glass-making was introduced into Persia by an Italian.

The reciprocal intellectual influence of the East and the West is an obscure subject. The Oriental languages are generally difficult of acquisition to Europeans, and though Arabic must have been, to a considerable extent, adopted by the Syrian Christians soon after the Mohammedan conquest of Palestine, and prevailed widely among the followers of both religions in Spain when Haroun al Raschid and Charlemagne exchanged letters and presents, there is little evidence of the pursuit of Indian or even Persian lore by Christian scholars until long after the middle of the sixteenth century, when the Florentine Sassetti detected the relationship between Sanskrit and the languages of Europe. Colonel Yule thinks that even Polo, in his long sojourn in the Celestial Empire, did not learn the Chinese language, though he acquired some other Oriental tongues. Still, some interchange of intellectual as well as material products there certainly was,

even at periods of great mental torpor in Christendom. The Sanskrit religious romance of Śākya-Muni and a disciple became the Romish legend of Barlaam and Josaphat as early as the ninth century, and these Buddhist divinities secured a place in the old Christian martyrologies which they still retain in the festal calendar of Rome.

All this implies much personal intercourse along the borders of Christendom and heathendom, and of course such intercourse could not fail to lead to excursions to the chief internal marts and sources of production of precious wares. There was, besides, not to speak of crusades undertaken to secure to the Christian pilgrim free access to the holy shrines of Palestine, the stimulus of religious propagandism, which brought legions of armed Moslems into Christian Asia and Europe, and sent missionaries of the Cross into every Asiatic country. Although we know that many a Christian apostle penetrated far into mysterious Asia to preach the Gospel of peace to the Paynim, not many of these emissaries have left any record of their missions. One, however, who preceded Polo by but a few years, is too remarkable to be passed unnoticed. We allude to the Minorite friar, Rubruquis, despatched by Louis IX. on a political and religious embassy to the Tartars, translations of whose narrative were published by Hakluyt and by Pinchas. These fully justify the judgment of Colonel Yule, who characterizes this journal as marked by "rich detail, vivid pictures, acuteness of observation, and strong good sense," and as "a book which has few superiors in the whole library of travel." Our editor admits that it is only with rare exceptions that Marco Polo exhibits any of the remarkable intellectual qualities of Rubruquis, and still less does he claim for him "the genius and lofty enthusiasm, the ardent and justified previsions, which mark the great Admiral [Columbus] as one of the lights of the human race." Polo's real title to the regard of posterity, "his indisputable and, in their kind, unique claims to glory" are summed up in the following passage on pp. 103 and 104 of the introduction to this second edition of Polo's travels:

"He was the first traveller to trace a route across the whole longitude of ASIA, naming and describing kingdom after kingdom which he had seen with his own eyes—the deserts of PERSIA, the flowering plateaux and wild gorges of BADAUKHAN, the jade-bearing rivers of KHOTAN, the MONGOLIAN steppes, cradle of the power that had so lately threatened to swallow up Christendom, the new and brilliant court that had been established at CAMBALUC; the first traveller to reveal CHINA in all its wealth and vastness, its mighty rivers, its huge cities, its rich manufactures, its swarming population, the inconceivably vast fleets that quickened its seas and its inland waters: to tell us of the natives on its borders, with all their eccentricities of manners and of worship; of TIBET, with its sordid devotees; of BURMA, with its golden pagodas and their tinkling crowns; of LAOS, of SIAM, of COCHIN-CHINA, of JAPAN, the Eastern Thule, with its rosy pearls and golden-roofed palaces; the first to speak of that Museum of Beauty and Wonder, still so imperfectly ransacked, the INDIAN ARCHIPELAGO, source of those aromatics then so highly prized, and whose origin was so dark; of JAVA, the Pearl of Islands; of SUMATRA, with its many kings, its strange, costly products, and its cannibal races; of the naked savages of NICOBAR and ANDAMAN; of CEYLON, the ISLE OF GEMS, with the sacred mountain and the Tomb of Adam; of INDIA THE GREAT, not as a dreamland of Alexandrian fables, but as a country seen and partially explored, with its virtuous Brahmins, its obscene ascetics, its diamonds, and the strange tales of their acquisition, its sea-beds of pearl, and its powerful sun; the first in mediæval times to give any distinct account of the secluded Christian Empire of ABYSSINIA and the semi-Christian Island of SOCOTRA; to speak, though indeed dimly, of ZANZIBAR, with its negroes and its ivory, and of the vast and distant MADAGASCAR, bordering on the dark ocean of the South, with its Rue and other monstrosities; and, in a remotely opposite region, of SIBERIA and the ARCTIC OCEAN, of dog-sledges, of white bears, and reindeer-riding Tunguses.

"That all this rich catalogue of discoveries should belong to the revelations of one man and one book is surely ample ground enough to account for and to justify the author's high place in the roll of fame; and there can be no need to exaggerate his greatness or to invest him with imaginary attributes."

This "rich catalogue of discoveries," illustrated, rounded out, and completed as it has been by Colonel Yule's great knowledge and laborious researches, forms one of the most important chapters in the history of geographical enquiry, and we earnestly recommend it as an indispensable acquisition to every public library and every comprehensive private collection of books of great and permanent value.

GEORGE P. MARSH.

ROME, June 26, 1875.

THE WAY WE LIVE NOW.*

THE good American will find in this novel not only an entertaining story of modern life, but also a justification for his love of country. Whatever hard things have been said in times past of America by English travellers, English newspapers, and English writers, no description of ordinary

* *The Way We Live Now. A Novel. By Anthony Trollope. With illustrations. New York: Harpers. 1875.*

American life at their hands was ever made blacker than this picture of English civilization by Mr. Trollope. Whether it is a fair picture or not, we do not undertake to say, but Mr. Trollope is not a satirist, and hitherto his descriptions have been always accounted truthful. Moreover, in the great international controversy which has been raging so long between England and the United States as to which is the worse country of the two, we, on this side of the water, are certainly entitled, black as we may be, to the presumption that such a state of society as Mr. Trollope here describes could not have been absolutely invented, even by so clever a novelist as Mr. Trollope.

The novel contains descriptions of several different kinds of English life—the great world in London; the younger club life in London; genteel English country life and humble English country life; and we are allowed also to get a glimpse or two of the journalistic world in London and of commercial life, and of course learn a good deal of the condition of the matrimonial market. On the whole, we have found the most interesting and attractive part of the book to be that relating to the Bear Garden, a West-End club got up for the benefit of a number of young gentlemen who are after a fashion social reformers. Every one who has ever belonged to a club has observed that the habit of opening it early in the morning and closing at midnight really amounts to a premium upon early hours and the prejudices of the senile class which affects such hours. That carpets should be worn out and morning papers bought and other expenses incurred for the few old dotards who may happen to drop into their club before the afternoon, while the great majority of the members do not get up till two o'clock and begin to play loo and "blind hockey" at midnight, is clearly so much waste. To reform such evils as these the Bear Garden was started; opening at three in the afternoon and remaining open till morning. The chief frequenters of the club with whom the story has to do are Sir Felix Carbury, a young baronet (son of a doting mother) who has run through his property and is rapidly going to the devil; Mr. Miles Grendall, the son of the broken-down Lord Alfred Grendall; Lord Nidderdale; Lord Grasslough; and Mr. Adolphus, or Dolly, Longstaffe. Sir Felix is a confirmed gambler, drunkard, liar, and coward, while Grendall habitually cheats at cards (if we understand a hint thrown out by Mr. Trollope, Sir Felix by-and-by begins to imitate him); Lord Nidderdale is an honest young fellow having his "fling" with no nonsense about him, and intending to marry, not from inclination, but as his father may determine, whenever the "fling" shall have lasted long enough; and Dolly is a young man about town of independent property. Dolly himself is an amusing character, but his family, we are bound to say, is not, his mother being a fool, and his sisters two wise virgins who not only admit to themselves, but almost make public proclamation of the fact, that they are what our friends of the Bear Garden would call "on the marry"; and so plainly does one of them talk about this that she actually loses a husband—an honest old Jew evidently not accustomed to Christian plain speaking—by it.

To return to the club. It is managed by one Herr Vossner, who undertakes to carry it on and relieve the members of all the trouble of superintendence. This the members—all of whom seem, during most of the book, to be nearly born fools—think is an admirable plan; and so indeed it turns out to be, for Herr Vossner. The main occupation of the club, of course, is cards, and, as ready-money is not always to be had for this purpose, the members issue their "paper" for their gambling debts, and when the worst comes to the worst get Herr Vossner to "do" bills for them. All this is natural enough, but the utter indifference of the members to cheating is rather remarkable. Miles Grendall is, as we say, detected at producing an illegitimate number of aces from his sleeve, and this fact is communicated by Sir Felix to one or two of the other members. The only effect it seems to produce on their minds, however, is of regret that so unpleasant a thing should be mentioned; and so they all go on playing with Miles as before. Miles not only cheats, but gives his I O U's to his antagonists in such unlimited quantities, and with such an entire disregard of the necessity of redeeming them, that they become so much waste-paper, being "based" on the entire wealth of Miles himself, which is nil. This, too, one would have thought, would have greatly diminished the pleasure of playing with Miles, but it does not seem to. One evening, Mr. Fisker, the American "financier" of the book, goes to the club and is invited to play, and wins heavily. What is passed over to him, however, is not the coin of the realm, but the elastic currency issued by Miles, of which the losers have a great abundance; and we are rather surprised, on the whole, that one or two of the more conservative players insist on making a little arrangement with Vossner by which they pay Fisker, the next morning, in hard money. In the end the club is found closed one fine day, Vossner having absconded

over-night with the spoons, and having sold the paper in his possession to another gentleman, strongly suspected of being his partner.

Mr. Augustus Melmotte, one of the leading characters of the book, is a Continental sharper, who has risen from the gutter to the possession of great wealth, and has settled in London for the purpose, among other things, of getting social position. He is ignorant, arrogant, is rather a suspected character, and yet he gets on swimmingly in London society. His daughter becomes engaged to Lord Nidderdale, and he himself is elected to Parliament from Westminster, though so totally unaccustomed to the ways of Parliamentary life that he begins his first speech in reply to one of the members of the House by getting up with his hat still on and exclaiming, "Mr. Brown is all wrong," and on a cry of order being made, adding, "Yes, you are," frowning angrily at the member in question. The general tone of English manners described in the book is so peculiar that we should not ourselves have been sure that there would be anything out of the way in all this; but we have Mr. Trollope's word for it that Mr. Melmotte's manner of addressing the House was unparliamentary. His daughter Marie falls in love with Sir Felix Carbury, who is advised by his mother, Lady Carbury, to run away with her, and actually makes an appointment to do so. She is supposed to be a great catch, and it is on this account that Lady Carbury desires the marriage. Unfortunately, at the last moment, after Marie has arranged all the details of the elopement, and Sir Felix has got the necessary money to carry them both to New York (they are to be married on board ship), he imprudently gambles it all away, and, being too drunk to remember the engagement, naturally misses the train for Liverpool. It ought not to be forgotten, as illustrating the constancy and fundamental shrewdness of Lord Nidderdale and his father, that the latter, notwithstanding the attempted elopement—for Marie herself did actually go to Liverpool with her maid to meet Felix—consents to a re-engagement with her, which is only finally broken off with the general smash-up of the Melmotte establishment brought about by the discovery that Augustus himself is a forger.

There is not wanting an American swindle, which consists of a railroad line to connect Mexico with California. This project Fisk and Melmotte father, and the operations of the directors on the London market consist, of course, of the usual hocus-pocus with shares issued and tied up at the same time, brilliant prospectuses, and very little railroad-building. What strikes us chiefly about this part of the book is the extraordinary folly of the English public, which can be induced to invest in an enterprise presided over by Melmotte, assisted by the young gentlemen of the Bear Garden, who go into the management as ornamental directors, but who do not pretend, in their very open and unguarded conversation, to know anything about the scheme or to have the remotest idea of its merits.

Mr. Trollope's picture of the literary life of London is entertaining, but it is not fresh. We have heard something before now of that dishonest tribe, the critics, and it hardly needed the amusing correspondence of Lady Carbury, the doting mother of Sir Felix, with the three editors of the *Beehive*, the *Morning Breakfast-Table*, and the *Evening Pulpit*, on the subject of her venture, 'Criminal Queens,' to show the real relation between authors and the conductors of the press in London. How Lady Carbury cajoles one editor and throws herself on the mercy of a second, and allows a third, without too much reproach, to kiss her in a moment of frenzied admiration, need not be told, nor how little her manoeuvres help the sale of 'Criminal Queens.' Poor Lady Carbury, whose severe literary labors are only varied by the performance of the maternal duty of letting her son in at daybreak, when he is in a condition that renders the use of his latch-key difficult, has a hard life, and it would have seemed only fair for the author to have disposed of Sir Felix in some way before the novel ended. But though he is terribly mauled on one occasion by honest John Crumb, who suspects him, not without reason, of dishonorable designs with regard to the young woman John desires to marry, he makes no sort of resistance, but allows himself to be beaten like a cur, and so preserves his valuable existence, to the inevitable future misery of his mother.

Paul Montague, the honest young man of the book, is so extraordinarily weak that we cannot help wondering that he comes out as well as he does. He is always getting into some mess, either being engaged to one woman when he is rapidly becoming interested in another, or gambling, or getting his property involved, or entangling himself in some other way. He is well-drawn, as all the characters in the book are, but, one asks, why should so feeble a creature be thought worth drawing at all? He is in love with Hetta Carbury, and has been engaged to Mrs. Hurtle, an American widow, who has killed her man and been divorced from her husband, but with all her eccentricities is perhaps the nicest person in the book; and with Hetta her cousin Roger Carbury is

also in love. Roger is an honest country gentleman, who is almost removed from the main current of the story, and who evidently thinks that "the way we live now" is not at all a good way to live.

On the whole, it is impossible to read "The Way We Live Now" without feeling that life, at any rate in certain quarters, is getting even with literature very fast. The best writers of fiction have always maintained that even in novel-writing there was some room to improve upon nature, either in the plot or in the characters, or the combination of the two; but if modern society is to be really made up of the Carburys and their friends, and the Melmottes are to lead it, we are free to confess that we think literature must lag far behind the reality. A novelist may describe it, and describe it entertainingly, as Mr. Trollope does, but cannot idealize it very much. It is on this account that we have the less doubt that Mr. Trollope has given a lifelike picture of "our Best Society."

Report upon the Condition of Affairs in the Territory of Alaska. By Henry W. Elliott, Special Agent Treasury Department. (Washington: Government Printing Office. 1875. 8vo, pp. 277.)—We have already referred (*Nation*, Feb. 4, 1875) to the volume in quarto printed by the Government in 1873 on the habits of the fur-seal of Alaska and the seal-fisheries in general. The volume which now lies before us is by the same author, and contains enlarged data on the same subject, together with a variety of other matter. Of its contents, five pages are devoted to prefatory remarks, ten to an essay on the character of the country, thirteen to the natives of Alaska and their condition, six to the duty of the Government with regard to the Territory and its people, fifteen to the nature and statistics of the fur-trade, nine to the sea-otter trade, fifty-eight to the condition of affairs on the Seal Islands, forty-four to the habits of the fur-seal, walrus, etc., three to the cod and salmon fisheries, forty-five to a reprint of the ornithological notice of the Prybilov Islands, by Dr. Coues, which first appeared in the Report of 1873, and the remainder to an appendix, consisting of notes on St. Matthew and St. Lawrence Islands, correspondence, statistics, extracts from Veniaminoff's 'Zapieska' (1840), and the law of Congress and regulations of the Alaska Commercial Company relating to the seal fisheries. The Report is not illustrated.

Mr. Elliott's first visit to Alaska was about the year 1866, when he passed from the British head-waters of the Stickeen River to the seaboard on his way to Victoria. In the spring of 1872, he was sent by the Treasury to the Island of St. Paul, touching on his way at Unalashka. He wintered at St. Paul, spending part of the following spring at St. George, and returning to San Francisco via Unalashka in August, 1873. In 1874, Congress appropriated \$20,000 for two years' investigation by Mr. Elliott of "the present condition of the seal-fisheries of Alaska; the haunts and habits of the seal; the preservation and extension of the fisheries as a source of revenue to the United States, with like information regarding the fur-bearing animals of Alaska generally; the statistics of the fur-trade, and the condition of the people or natives, especially those upon whom the successful prosecution of the fisheries and fur-trade is dependent." Some members of the House having expressed themselves sceptical as to the ability of the gentleman named to carry out fully the intent of the bill alone, an officer of the Navy (Lieut. Washburn Maynard) was added to the commission. His report, however, is not printed with that of Mr. Elliott. These gentlemen sailed for the Seal Islands in the spring of 1874, touching at Sitka and Unalashka, and spending some weeks on the sealing grounds. In July they examined the uninhabited island of St. Matthew, and touched at St. Lawrence, at both places adding to our geographical knowledge, as they had previously done at St. Paul. They then returned to Unalashka, and sailed thence directly for San Francisco.

The general conclusions at which Mr. Elliott arrives are: That the agricultural resources of the country are nil; the mineral resources promising, though hardly to any extent investigated; the salmon-fisheries extensive and likely to be made productive; the cod-fisheries sufficient only for a local supply; that the seal-fisheries may be indefinitely carried on on the present basis without diminishing the supply; that firearms should be prohibited in sea-otter hunting and a summer close-time established; that the condition of the natives is far better than under the Russian rule; that the Alaska Commercial Company exhibits praiseworthy regard for the welfare of the people, and that its interests are identical with those of the Government and the natives; that there "is absolutely no law, no means of protection, no redress for injury, for any citizen of the United States even, to say nothing of natives" (pp. 233, 237, ¶ 4); that the troops should be removed from Sitka and a steam revenue vessel substituted for them, to traverse the Territory and carry the mails; that supervisory agents and school-teachers for the Aleuts would

"amount to nothing but discord and mischief" (p. 238); and, finally, that "it would be wrong to hint that the country is worthless, for on the Seal Islands alone the Government possesses property which would not remain in the market many days unsold were it offered for seven millions, and from which the annual revenue is doubly sufficient to meet all expenditures for the proper government of the whole Territory, if the matter was correctly adjusted." Mr. Elliott also thinks that the headquarters of the Territory should be removed from Sitka to Unalashka or Kodiak, as being nearer the centre of trade and civilized population.

Could we accept these conclusions without reserve, the showing, in a pecuniary point of view, would be more favorable than some of the reports concerning the Territory which have come to hand. Mr. Elliott has certainly made himself an authority on the habits of the fur-seal and the character of the islands on which they sojourn. His contributions to our knowledge of them and to our general geographical knowledge of some of the other islands of Behring Sea, are valuable and important. The name of Dr. Coues is a sufficient guarantee of the character and interest of the ornithological notes. The translations from Veniaminoff are of interest chiefly as relating to the conditions of thirty-five years ago. But when we examine the chapters on the present condition and character of the Territory and its inhabitants in the light of the itinerary above given, we find that they are based almost exclusively on the notes of Veniaminoff and information derived (as far as acknowledged in the Report) from individuals now or lately in the employ of the Alaska Commercial Company. Mr. Elliott's ocular observation has not extended over more than one and a half percent. of the whole Territory; he has never touched the mainland of the Territory except at the Stickeen River; his actual residence has been confined to two little barren islands containing an area of not over 150 square miles. When, therefore, he says (p. 4) that he has "given the Yukon, Aleutian, and Sitkan districts close attention, having yet to more fully examine the Kodiak, Cook's Inlet, and Copper River districts," it would have been less misleading to the reader if he had stated that he has visited Unalashka in the Aleutian district; four islands in Behring Sea; Sitka and the Stickeen in the Sitkan district; and, for the rest, has collected reports from traders and other sources. How a "careful study of the history and habits of the sea-otter" is compatible with absence of personal observation of the living animal and the localities it inhabits, and how "old experienced fishermen whom I have met in the country personally engaged in fishing in these waters" (p. 5), from whom he professes to have derived his opinion of the value of the cod-fisheries, could have been met when Mr. Elliott has never visited the fishing-grounds, is not very clear. It would appear as if the Government might save the expense of agents and establishments on the Seal Islands by doing away with them altogether, if the interests of the Company are so clearly identical with those of the Government and natives as Mr. Elliott would have us (p. 95) believe. It would certainly seem, if no law, redress, or protection is to be obtained by whites or natives, that some action to establish such law and protection is called for from the Government. In this part of the world also an impression prevails that officers of law, clergymen, and school-teachers are capable of something beside discord and mischief, and that well-disposed natives have something of a claim to an education of a primary character, especially when they have enjoyed it under the despotic rule of Russia.

The Report is also marred by occasional errors of fact. On p. 17 we are informed that the temperature at Unalashka for July and August, 1831, did not rise above 35° Fahr., and that evenings were common with as low a temperature as 12°. A reference to Veniaminoff shows that the *minimum* for that period was 39.4°, the mean temperature 46.8°, and the maximum 64.6° Fahr. The statement on p. 20 that the Aleuts and Kodiak people with the inhabitants of the peninsula constitute one "decidedly distinct race" and the "Indians occupying all the rest (!) of the inhabited country" another; with that on p. 21, that the Eskimo of Kodiak have "no natural or blood affinity" with the Aleuts, might well astonish such veteran observers as Wrangell, Von Baer, and Erman. Again, on page 85, we are told that the "best" raw (fur-seal) skins are worth only \$5 to \$10, when the records of the London trade-sales show an average price in gold obtained for them of nearly double the amount stated (58-75s.) during the last four years.

We would suggest as an easy method of settling the vexed question of the value of Alaska for settlement that it be laid open to settlement by law of Congress, suspending the usual surveys until it be seen whether the expense would justify them. Then, if such deluded people as the Icelanders—who have examined the country and formed a different opinion from that evolved by Mr. Elliott—wish to settle there, they may freely indulge their propensity; and should they, in view of this Report, decide to stay away, no harm would be done to any one.

A Summer in Norway, with Notes on the Industries, Habits, Customs, and Peculiarities of the People, the History and Institutions of the Country, its Climate, Topography, and Productions; also, an account of the Red Deer, Reindeer, and Elk. By John Dean Caton, LL.D., ex-Chief-Justice of the Supreme Court of the State of Illinois. (Chicago: Jansen, McClurg & Co. 1875.)—Judge Caton has done what travellers in Norway are very apt to do: with an ever-present sense of adventure, as if he were exploring the heart of Africa or some equally unknown region, he has hastened, note-book in hand, from place to place, perused some random translation of the Sagas, and in this way gathered a miscellaneous mass of quite curious though sometimes inaccurate information, all of which he has with a due admixture of personal matter expanded into a book of formidable dimensions. The present work, although containing a great deal which can hardly interest any but the author's own friends, has at least the merit of being written in a very genial spirit, and the Norwegians have every reason to feel gratified at the flattering account which our author gives of their country, manners, and institutions. We do not mean to imply that this account is not, from Mr. Caton's point of view, in the main correct, although, to be sure, the voluminous title-page does seem to hold out a larger promise than the succeeding pages manage to keep.

When the author has occasion to use his eyes, he invariably uses them well, and his judgments of the Norwegian character—and, in fact, of everything relating to the present condition of the country—are remarkably sound and unaffected by prejudice either *pro* or *con*: but, whenever he allows his mind to stray into the regions of the past, he loses himself, and soon betrays that he is hopelessly at sea. A jumble of isolated facts, gathered from random sources, is not history, neither can it be honored with the title of "historical notes." The simplest fact of history, in order to be properly represented and understood, requires a tolerably accurate knowledge of the whole civilization to which it relates, and this knowledge Mr. Caton does not possess. His standard of judgment is invariably that of the nineteenth century, and it is needless to say that heroes like Olaf Trygvesson and Saint Olaf (or Olaf the Holy, as Mr. Caton calls him), measured by this standard, do not appear to advantage. Here is, for instance, a passage which strikingly illustrates the author's want of historical perspective: "Had Olaf [Trygvesson] adhered to the monogamic teaching of Christianity, and been content with a single wife, he might have reigned long enough to have allowed the new faith to have taken root, but he must marry another wife, and go and claim her dower at the point of the lance." Again, on page 187, he administers a wholesome rebuke to Gyda, whom Harald the Fairhaired wooed, because, prompted by foolish ambition, she exacted of her lover that he should conquer all the kingdom of Norway, instead of marrying him for love while he was yet comparatively poor and unrenowned. But, after all, there were some ameliorating circumstances. "It may not be easy," he adds, in apology of her conduct, "for those of this generation, when staid and monogamic habits have revolutionized the sense of the proprieties of life, to understand how the triumphant bride could feel no humiliation in the knowledge that she possessed but a fraction of her husband's love, and share the royal couch with half-a-dozen wives, more or less." Evidently, Mr. Caton is not blest with too much humor. No wonder, therefore, that he can muster but little sympathy for "the insupportable bigotry and superstition of the pagan religion" (page 193): it is all an abomination to him. And still, knowing the tenacity with which the Norsemen clung to this barbaric faith, he has nothing but blame for the really great and powerful king, Saint Olaf, who, unwilling to accept a compromise, sacrificed his life in the effort to Christianize his kingdom. The means he employed were, judged from our present enlightened point of view, objectionable; therefore "this precious saint," as our author thinks, was worthy of no honor.

It is in no way surprising that Mr. Caton repeats the error, so common even among the more scholarly writers on Scandinavian history, of translating the word *vik* by the English "sea-king"; and, for the information of others, be it here stated that the word is not derived from *vi* (which, by the way, in Old Norse means nothing) and *king*, but from the word *vik* (a bight, bay) and the substantive termination *-ing*, as in English *lithing*, *whiting*, and consequently refers to the custom of the vikings of running into sounds and bays to seek booty and plunder. A reference to Vigfússon and other authorities will convince any one that this etymology is well established. When, however, the author in other places speaks of "Jarls or Vikings," and, again, of "Jarls or kings," he has not even the excuse of precedent for his blunder.

Mr. Caton's literary style is by no means above criticism. The inelegance of constructions like the following is self-evident: "With him he lived six years, who seems to have treated him well, without making him

feel the pressure of bondage," etc.; and again, on the same page: "Here he lived under the protection of his uncle, making great proficiency in all athletic accomplishments, in which he showed a dexterity and courage far beyond all other boys of his age, which gave promise of his wonderful future." The spelling of proper names is no less capricious than is that of Mr. Carlyle in his late work on the 'Early Kings of Norway.' We find, for instance, *Haagan* for *Håkon* or Danish *Hagen*; *Bjarn* for *Bjarne*, etc. But, in spite of these and other minor deficiencies, we have no hesitation in recommending Mr. Caton's volume as, on the whole, an entertaining and, in everything which relates to the life of to-day, very satisfactory account of what it purports to describe. The visit to the Lapp encampment is an interesting bit of narrative, and the author's reflections on the Norwegian industries, national customs, and government are well worthy of notice, betraying, as they do, a keenly observing and practically intelligent mind. He is, as far as we know, the first foreign traveller who has given anything

like a correct statement of the nature of the union between Norway and Sweden.

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